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SOCCER WEEKLY

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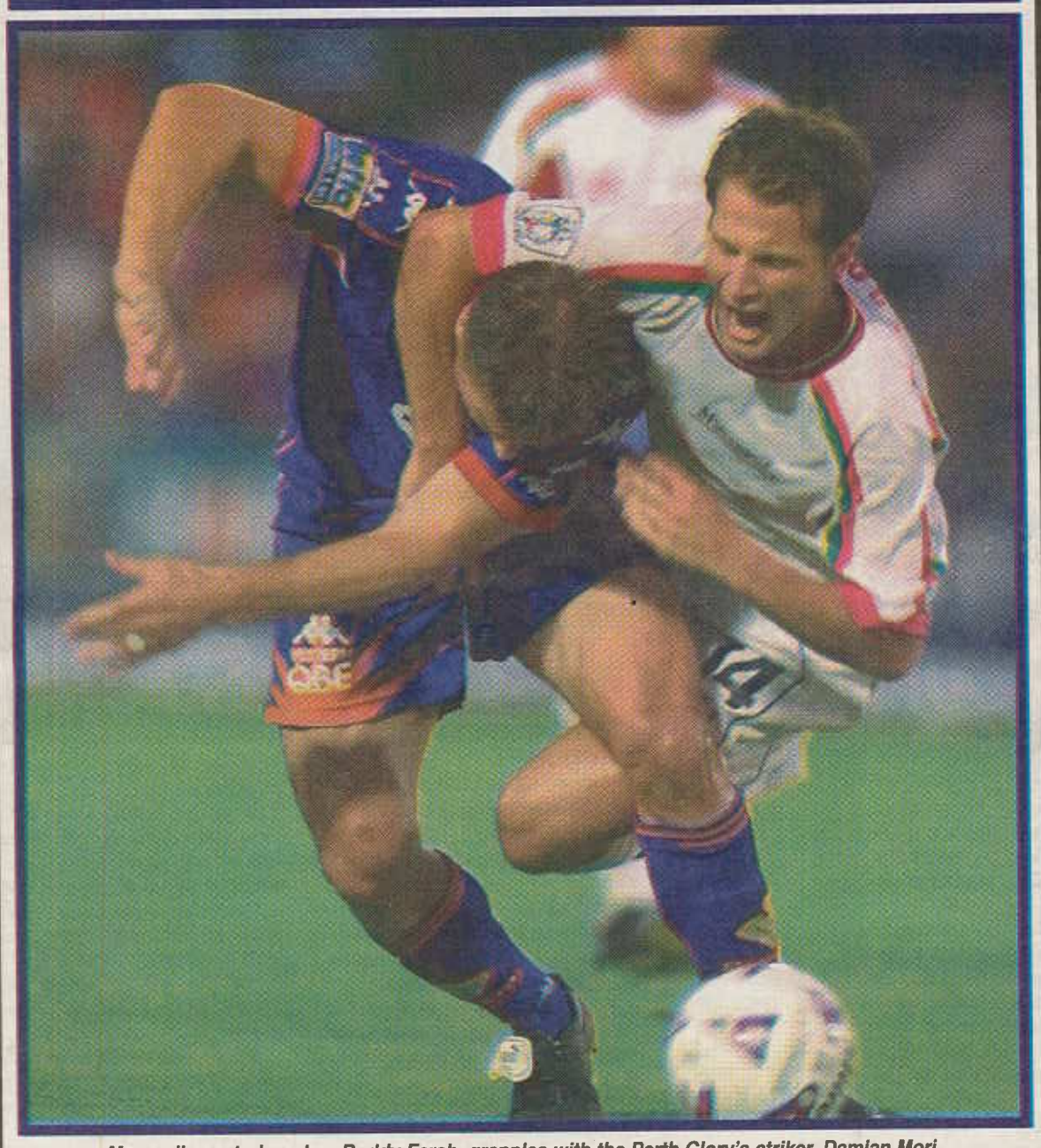
GLORY TAKEN DOWN



Marconi's central marker, Buddy Farah, grapples with the Perth Glory's striker, Damian Mori.

"Sorry about that, Dad"

Jamie Afkos thinks his Dad an unwanted Christmas gift.

By John Economos

Jamie Afkos, may well have given his Dad a Christmas gift he would rather forget after Marconi's 22 year old midfielder scored the sole goal of the match at the Perth Oval in Marconi's 0-1 victory over the Perth Glory.

Little Afkos, (son of the Perth Glory's Vice President, Paul), who last season played for the Glory in the Grand Final, silenced his former home-crowd with his strike and first ever goal in the NSL, scored in the 35th minute.

Marconi's star midfielder Angelo Costanzo, made the bust to lay on the telling pass to Afkos.

Afkos, who turns 23 in 10 days, sweetly struck a lethal left footed angled drive to hit the target in the far corner that grabbed all three precious League points for Marconi.

The Marconi hero was released by Perth Glory at the end of last season, a decision that proved last Saturday evening in Perth, most costly.

Despite all this, and as soon as he had scored, the Glory fans refused to jeer 'little Afkos' as he was beseiged by his most joyous Marconi team-mates.

Veli's 250 - Not Out

By John Economos

Velimir Kupresak, Sydney United's king of centre backs, played his 250th NSL match last Saturday night at the Croatian Sports Centre against South Melbourne.

The 37 year old quality defender, when contacted by ABSW last night, stated: "I'm very proud to have played all 250 NSL games with Sydney United.

"It's a nice feeling."

The evergreen Kupresak then added: "It's not an easy thing to play all 250 games in the NSL with just the one club."

The durable defender who joined the then called Sydney Croatia Club from Victorian State League side, St Albans in 1989, has over the years tasted sweet success as well as bitter defeats.

Losing the 1997 Grand Final 2-0 against Frank Farina's Brisbane Strikers rates amongst 'Veli's' most bitter memories.

When it comes to reminiscing over one of his most enjoyable games and highlights of his career with Sydney United, 'Veli' was quick to respond.

"Our game and 2-1 win over the Perth Glory under our then coach, David Mitchell which got us into the 1998 Grand Final against South Melbourne, was one of my fondest of memories," ended Velimir.

Meanwhile David Mitchell, who now is head coach with the Parramatta Power, saluted Kupresak by stating: "Veli is a real professional and a real gentleman in Australian Soccer."

Velimir Kupresak 250 matches for Sydney United.

SOUTH MELBOURNE'S BIG PROMOTION AGAINST OLYMPIC ... PAGE 13

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COSMOS CHASE CON

By Graham Cooke

Canberra Cosmos coach Tom Sermanni believes out-of-work Carlton defender Con Anthopoulos is the man to provide the finishing touches to his squad, but worries whether his cash-strapped club will have the resources to close the deal.

"I'd love to have Con — and this is no sudden fancy, I would have taken him at the beginning of the season if he had been prepared to come," Sermanni said.

Tom Sermanni: Cosmos coach feels Con Anthopoulos is the missing link in his side.

"He has been highly recommended by people like Stuart Munro and Jeff Olver, and I've had a few brief conversations with him, but at the time he wanted to stay at Carlton and

Con Anthopoulos: Could be headed to Bruce Stadium.

try to establish himself in the first team."

That dream crashed into ruins last week, when Carlton folded under the burden of their mounting debts. Now Anthopoulos is unemployed and in no position to make financial demands, but Sermanni said money was never a major issue.

"What he wanted from us wasn't outrageous then, and I doubt if anything has changed," the coach said. "It's just a case of our limited resources."

However, Cosmos chairman Danny Moulis appeared to pour cold water on the plan when he said that for the rest of the season its was "steady as she goes".

"Of course Tom will seek the best players for his squad, but I believe we already have an excellent line-up," he said.

"I also worry that some of the Carlton players will have had estimations of their worth inflated by the extremely high wages they were being paid by the club - part of the reason it is no more."

Whether it results in an additional player for the Cosmos or not, Sermanni said Carlton's demise was bad for the game. "Suddenly you've got a whole group of players out of work, not to mention the coaching and administrative staff," he said.

"Given there have been rumours of problems at Carlton for some time, I'm surprised the league did not step in before it came to this.

"It seems that the management

Danny Moulis: Believes that the Cosmos already has an excellent squad.

expected to run the club and make a profit solely by bringing players along and then selling them. Anyone who thinks they can make money out of soccer in Australia in this way, or any other, has taken bad advice."

Belconnen to face Samoan Champions

By Graham Cooke

Titavi, of Samoa, come to Canberra this week in search of a formula to cause an Oceania upset and a passport to riches in the World Club Championship.

The Samoan champion, Titavi will contest the Oceania qualifying round of the championship from January 9 to 22, expected to end up as a contest between Wollongong Wolves and New Zealand side Napier City.

The winners will represent the region at the money-spinning world championship in Spain between July 30 and August 12.

Titavi will get a taste of Australian-style football with a game against the Belconnen Blue Devils from the NSW Premier League at the Australian Institute of Sport on Friday.

For Belconnen, in the midst of the two-week festive break, the game will provide some valuable match practice in the run-up to the resumption of competition, against Leichhardt Tigers at the West Belconnen Sports Ground on January 6.

Former Canberran Vic Fernandez, now the Samoan national coach, will be assisting Titavi. One of the country's most experienced team bosses, he worked with various Australian national sides over more than a decade, was a coach of Canberra City in the early days of the National Soccer League, and of Monaro and Canberra Deakin at various times in the NSW League.

From all the team at ABSW, we thankyou all for your continued support throughout 2000 and hope 2001 will be even bigger and better.
We hope you all have a great New Year period.

OLYMPIC SUFFER AT CARLTON'S EXPENSE

Carlton's termination from the NSL competition for this year has hit two clubs hard. Obviously Carlton has felt the full brunt of a decision, which has ended the inevitable, and has put to sleep what was becoming a club waiting to die.

However the decision by Soccer Australia to give each of the 15 remaining clubs a 3-0 win over Carlton and three competition points for both home and away games played against the Melbourne club so far this year and games still to be played, has seen Sydney Olympic plummet from top spot to fourth.

Olympic have been the only club and will be the only club to have beaten Carlton on the field this season, their 3-0 win at Belmore on November 12 putting the Sydneysiders on top of the ladder.

Branko Culina: Olympic coach.

Obviously Sydney Olympic is furious to say the least with the decision by Soccer Australia.

Olympic do have a point, teams that have been walloped by Carlton this season, most notably Sydney United (4-0) and Eastern Pride (3-1) will now not only find themselves with three points instead of none, but also a positive for and against.

For example United, who before the start of round 11, found themselves with a for and against record of negative seven (13-20), are now back on track with a more respectable 16 goals both for and against, a big difference come finals time.

Whilst Carlton's removal from the league came sooner rather than later, Olympic has felt the full brunt of this decision.

Talk of legal action against Soccer Australia's decision has floated around this week, however the question that beckons is if results for the first 10 rounds are to stand, what will happen to the clubs still to play Carlton?

Should they just be given three points and a 3-0 result and the other 10 teams to have already played Carlton have their results stand, or do all games against Carlton be nul in void, that is no game, no points, no goals (apart from personal tallies)?

Only time will tell weather Olympic will miss out on a finals berth because of this decision.

Below is both the old ladder, before the expulsion of Carlton, and the new ladder. The complete updated ladder can be seen on page 24.

QANTAS THE SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIA	TOTAL							HOME						AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A
SYDNEY OLYMPIC	10	6	2	2	17	9	20	5	4	0	1	9	2	5	2	2	2	8	7
WOLLONGONG WOLVES	10	6	2	2	19	13	20	5	3	1	1	8	5	5	3	1	1	11	8
SOUTH MELBOURNE	10	5	4	1	20	9	19	5	3	2	0	13	5	5	2	2	1	7	4
PERTH GLORY	9	5	2	2	18	9	17	5	4	1	0	13	2	4	1	1	2	5	7
PARRAMATTA POWER	10	5	1	4	16	13	16	6	3	0	3	10	10	4	2	1	1	6	3
NORTHERN SPIRIT	10	3	5	2	13	9	14	5	2	3	0	6	2	5	1	2	2	7	7
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS	10	4	2	4	15	16	14	5	3	1	1	10	5	5	1	1	3	5	11
CARLTON SC	8	3	4	1	13	9	13	4	2	2	0	10	4	4	1	2	1	3	5
MARCONI STALLIONS	10	3	4	3	11	10	13	5	2	1	2	7	7	5	1	3	1	4	3
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE	9	4	1	4	12	16	13	5	2	1	2	9	11	4	2	0	2	3	5
SYDNEY UNITED	10	3	3	4	13	20	12	5	2	3	0	9	7	5	1	0	4	4	13
CANBERRA COSMOS	10	3	2	5	18	19	11	4	1	0	3	7	8	6	2	2	2	11	11
BRISBANE STRIKERS	10	2	4	4	13	17	10	4	1	2	1	6	6	6	1	2	3	7	11
FOOTBALL KINGZ	10	2	3	5	14	20	9	5	2	2	1	9	5	5	0	1	4	5	15
NEWCASTLE UNITED	10	1	4	5	6	19	7	5	1	1	3	3	8	5	0	3	2	3	11
EASTERN PRIDE	10	0	3	7	11	21	3	5	0	3	2	5	8	5	0	0	5	5	12

UPDATED LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Wolves	10	6	1	2	20	11	22
S. Melb	10	5	3	1	22	8	21
Glory	10	5	2	2	21	9	20
Olympic	10	5	2	2	17	9	20
Spirit	10	3	4	2	15	8	16
Power	10	5	1	4	16	13	16
Ad. City	10	4	1	4	15	16	16
S. United	10	3	3	3	16	16	15
Cosmos	10	3	2	4	20	17	14
Knights	10	4	2	4	15	16	14
Marconi	10	3	4	3	11	10	13
Kingz	10	2	2	5	17	20	11
Strikers	10	2	4	4	13	17	10
N. United	10	1	4	5	6	19	7
Pride	10	0	3	6	13	18	6

FULL TABLE, PAGE 24

The Good Oil ... The Good Oil ...

Velimir Kupresak: 250 NSL games, 'Not Out'.

VELIMIR KUPRESAK, Sydney United's long-serving central marker, racked up his 250th match for the Club last Saturday night against the visiting South Melbourne.

The 37 year old magnificent marker, has now gone well past the previous record holder, striker Manis Lamond, (1986 to 1994), who had played 238 games with Sydney Croatia.

Sydney Croatia in 1984 had paid an NSL record transfer fee of $32,000 to Canberra City for the explosive flanker Lamond.

●●●●

THE PERTH GLORY last Friday afternoon signed up Craig Deans from the now defunct Carlton.

Deans was with the Glory two years ago and now has returned 'home'.

●●●●

Craig Deans: Back to the Glory.

ALBERTO BOLLINI, Lazio's assistant coach arrived in Perth last Friday to spend Christmas with the Glory's Chairman Nick Tana.

Tana has asked the media 'not to ready too much into this'.

Glory's coach Bernd Stange's contract with the Club ends this season.

Tana and Bollini have known each other for almost nine years.

●●●●

SOME bad blood between two coaches in the NSL erupted last weekend.

At the end of the match, coach 'A' went to shake the hand of coach 'B', to which the latter rejected.

Later at the press conference, coach 'A' offended coach 'B' with some subtle belittling remarks.

Coach 'B', a no-nonsense style of bloke, snapped, made a hit-back to coach 'A' before getting up and storming out of the conference.

Nick Tana: The Glory's Chairman.

Not embarrassed, and quite unperturbed, coach 'A' arrogantly went on to tell the media: "What do you expect from 'a new kid on the block'."

The 'kid', (coach 'B'), much older than coach 'A', was an excellent international in his day and doesn't tolerate any crap.

Coach 'A' was never been an international.

●●●●

JAMIE AFKOS, Marconi's left wingback and sole scorer last Saturday night at Perth Oval, was relatively cool after the match with the media, despite being the ultimate hero for Marconi that collected all three most precious League points.

"I don't now really expect a Christmas present from my Dad after my goal," the Marconi player, and former Glory player, ironically stated.

Jamie's Father of course is none other than the Glory's foundation member and Vice president.

●●●●

By John Economos

Jamie Aftkos: Expected to be unrewarded by his Dad last Christmas.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC's four 'White Knights' were fuming even more following Soccer Australia's decision to award all teams a 3-0 winning scoreline for all matches that had been played against the now defunct Carlton.

Late last week, Olympic fired into Soccer Australia a legal letter with its intention that it will litigate against the decision.

One of the 'White Knights' suggested to 'Good Oil' just before Christmas, that Carlton should have been allowed to complete its first round of matches in the League.

He then added also that Soccer Australia should have been responsible for all the wages to be paid to the Carlton players.

'Good Oil' recently came across some information that was not so widely known to the Soccer public.

It's believed that Soccer officials such as Soccer Australia's C.E.O. David Woolley as well as the NSL's General manager, Stefan Kamasz, strongly recommended to the Board of Commissioners during the last off-season, that Carlton should not be allowed to start the season as they firmly believed that the Victorian Club at that stage was insolvent.

Both strongly recommended that Carlton's financial records should be audited before the Club was to be allowed to continue in the NSL.

Of course it wasn't done and of course the fiasco of the past two weeks surfaced.

●●●●

David Woolley: Soccer Australia's C.E.O.

Christmas holidays? No.

The Aussie official flew to the Pacific French Island nation to hold urgent talks with the national coach of France, hoping to entice him to a possible tour of Australia with the national team of France.

A Soccer official flew out of Sydney yesterday, bound for the tranquil surrounds of Tahiti.

Mission?

●●●●

SOUTH MELBOURNE officials have planned a huge promotional campaign that swung into action all this week for Saturday night's Big Game against the visiting Sydney Olympic at the Bob Jane Stadium.

Specially invited guests to the Big Game are former Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett and Chairman of Soccer Australia Basil Scarsella.

Souths collected another three League points last Saturday in Sydney when they soundly defeated Sydney United 0-3.

Sydney Olympic looked like being winners against the visiting Wollongong Wolves until the last minute when mobile midfielder Scott Chipperfield scored the equaliser to hold the Sydney side to a 2-2 draw.

●●●●

Mickey Petersen: South Melbourne's coach.

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The Good Oil ... The Good Oil ...

By John Economos

AN ENGLISH SOCCER CLUB has revealed it was still paying off one of five Australian players that had been recruited by former Australian coach Terry Venables more than two years ago.

Terry Venables: Debacle at Portsmouth, England.

Portsmouth boss Milan Mandaric, slammed a popular campaign to have Venables installed as new England manager.

Mr Mandaric stated his club was still paying the price for Venables' turbulent 18-month stint as chairman.

Mr Mandaric went on to state that Venables' transfer dealings, (in particular the five Australians he signed, most of whom were failures), had crippled the Club.

"I am still paying the bills from Venables' time here.

"And I am still paying money for some players who never kicked a ball at the Club," Mandaric told *The Sun* newspaper in England.

"I respect Venables as a good football manager, but I am not sure about his business credentials."

Venables paid STG 250,000 ($A683,000) for Australians Robbie Enes and Hamilton Thorp, who made just one start each, and STG 300,000 ($A820,000) for Craig Foster.

Craig Foster: Debacle at Portsmouth, England.

His one Australian success was John Aloisi, signed for STG 300,000 ($A819,000) from Cremonese and eventually sold to Coventry for STG 650,000 ($A1.77 million).

The Sun did not name the fifth Australian player.

Venables bought the Club in August 1996 and left in January 1998.

The Club stumbled into administration before Mandaric, (a Serbian businessman, who bailed it out for STG 4.5 million ($A12.29 million), at the start of 1999.

"I paid STG 4.5 million ($A 12.29 million) to creditors and STG 1.2 million ($A3.28 million) of that was to football-related creditors, mainly transfer fees," Mandaric said.

"I've paid virtually all of those off, with the exception of Foster,

"But I will soon. Then we can forget about that chapter in Club history."

●●●●

THE CHILEAN National coach of the 1974 World Cup team, died in Santiago at the age of 68.

An experienced technician, Pedro Morales was a hero in Soccer for Chile.

He was in charge of the national side which the Australian team, captained by Peter Wilson, pulled off a tough 0-0 draw against Chile on a muddy pitch in the Finals staged in West Germany.

Morales died in Santiago from a serious illness.

Peter Wilson: Australia's 1974 World Cup Finals captain clutching the Ampol Cup after Western Suburbs extra time win over Hakoah in the 1976 final at Wentworth Park.

●●●●

SYDNEY UNITED, despite its numerous problems off-the-pitch over recent times, has proved to be an outstanding survivor as a Club member in the NSL.

Consider the massive exhodus of players that went overseas in the past two years.

Gone have been David Zdrilic (Germany), Milé Sterjovski (France), Sean Babic (Belgium), Tony Popovic (Japan), Ante Milicic (Croatia), Zeljko Kalac (Holland), Jason Culina (Holland), Jacob Burns (England), Eddy Bosnar (Croatia), Nick Bosevski (Belgium), and they are just a few that readily come to mind to be mention.

As well, most of the above players also became internationals.

Yet this unyielding Club has consistently displayed resillience that no other club in the NSL could have done to continue to survive.

In the past eight years, Sydney United has by far performed as the best Sydney club in six of those years.

1994 — United 3rd, Marconi 4th.

1995-United 3rd, Sydney Olympic 9th.

1996 — Sydney Olympic 3rd, United 6th.

1997 — United 1st, Marconi 5th.

1998 — United 4th, Marconi 5th.

1999 — United 1st, Marconi 4th.

2000 — Sydney Olympic 5th, United 16th (after losing a massive 17 members of its playing and coaching staff).

United's survival has been nothing short of just incredible.

So at the end of this season, when Soccer Australia is going to slash the League from 15 teams to 12, ('Good Oil' believes maybe 14), will Sydney United automatically become the 'South Sydney' of Soccer to be guillotined?

Purely on track-record, would that be justice?

'Good Oil' most certainly thinks not.

●●●●

LAST WEDNESDAY NIGHT, Soccer Australia officially terminated Carlton's Licence in the NSL.

The Resolutions brought down by the National body, were:

a) That the Licence of the Carlton Soccer Club in the NSL be terminated immediately.

b) All NSL matches which Carlton had already played, or were scheduled to play, three League points were to be awarded to its opponents with a 3-0 scoreline.

c) Transfer of registered Carlton players was allowed up until last Friday, December 22nd, by 5pm, to allow them to have played with other NSL Clubs last week-end.

d) Although Carlton players have now been recognised as 'free agents' domestically, their status regarding international transfers is subject to further clarification by the Board Of Soccer Australia.

Dean Anastasiadis: Carlton's goalkeeper now available.

●●●●

LAST SATURDAY night in Perth, straight after the match against Marconi, the Glory announced that former national coach Frank Arok has been signed to set up a Youth Development Academy to groom youngsters for the NSL team.

Arok who had been employed as a Technical Director Of Youth for almost the past two years by Sydney Olympic, will severe his relationship with the Sydney club to take up his post with the Glory, next June.

●●●●

SOUTH MELBOURNE was quick to move out of the blocks as soon as it became known that Carlton had been deregistered from the NSL last week.

A communique, philanthropically fired out by Souths' promotional management team, extended to all Carlton supporters a Complimentary Season Pass for the remainder of this season to all its home games at the Bob Jane Stadium.

●●●●

SOUTH MELBOURNE'S Third Supporters' Forum will be held on Thursday, 22nd of February 2001, at 8pm at the Club's Champions' Sports bar.

The first of such Forums was staged last October and the second was organised last Thursday week.

For further information contact Andrew Dye on 03-9251 3203.

●●●●

GLASGOW RANGERS' YOUTH TEAM will arrive in Sydney early next month on a development and goodwill tour.

Whilst in Sydney, the Rangers' Youth squad will play five games including two matches against the Australian Youth team, plus a game each against the Northern Spirit's Youth and NSL first team.

As well, the Young Rangers will play a NSW Under 20s Select side.

The 19 man squad arrives in Sydney on January 4th and departs for Scotland on January 23rd.

Game Schedule:

Game No1: January 5th: Northern Spirit Youth vs Rangers' Youth, 5.30pm North Sydney Oval.

Game No2: January 9th: Australian Youth team vs Rangers' Youth, 7pm at the Bruce Stadium, Canberra.

Game No3: January 13th: Northern Spirit vs Rangers' Youth, at 5pm at North Sydney Oval.

Game No4: Australian Under 20s vs Rangers' Youth, at 6pm at the North Sydney Oval.

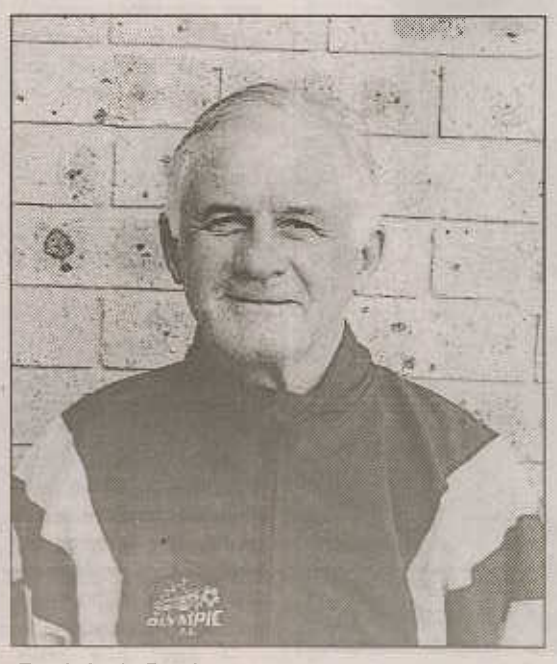
Game No5: NSW Under 20s Select vs Rangers' Youth at 5.pm, at the North Sydney Oval.

The two games on January 5th and 19th at North Sydney Oval will be played as 'Curtain Raisers' to the Northern Spirit's NSL matches against the Canberra Cosmos and South Melbourne respectively.

●●●●

Paul Henderson: Looking forward to the tour by Rangers early next month.

David Zdrilic: Another former Sydney United player that became an international.



Frank Arok: Ready to commence a new career with the Glory.

The Good Oil ... The Good Oil

By John Economos

PORT MORSEBY, New Guinea, was last week confirmed as the venue for the Oceania qualifying tournament to FIFA's second World Club Championships.

Ron Corry: Wollongong Wolves' coach.

The Wollongong Wolves, as the current Australian League Champions, and coached by former Australian international, Ronnie Corry, will link up with the 10 other national Oceania club champions, in the tournament that has been set down to be played from January 9th to the 21st.

The ultimate Winner will advance to the World Club Finals that will be staged next July in Spain.

That ultimate winning club of each Conference that qualifies through to the Finals in Spain, is reported to receive US $3 million from FIFA.

●●●●

NOW that South Australia's Basil Scarsella has been installed as the new president of the Oceania Football Conference, a mad scramble has started as to who will be his successor as Chairman at Soccer Australia.

A list of contenders has already surfaced from Soccer's cancerously political corridors.

Joe Brondolino, the Victorian Soccer Federation's president, Tony Labbozzetta, the current chairman of the NSL, plus Ian Knop, the former chairman of the Canberra Cosmos, have all tossed their hats into the political arena.

One other, former Sydney Olympic chairman, Gary Punch late last week joined the list of contenders for the No 1 national seat on the domestic scene.

Since his short stint with Olympic, Punch today is a director of the Parramatta Power club.

Elections will be held in February at Soccer Australia's annual A.G.M.

Don't be at all surprised that the ultimate winner will not be one of the two current favourites on the betting market.

The winner to surface could very easily come from a default situation.

The rivalry between the Victorian and NSW power brokers, (as usual), is as intense as ever.

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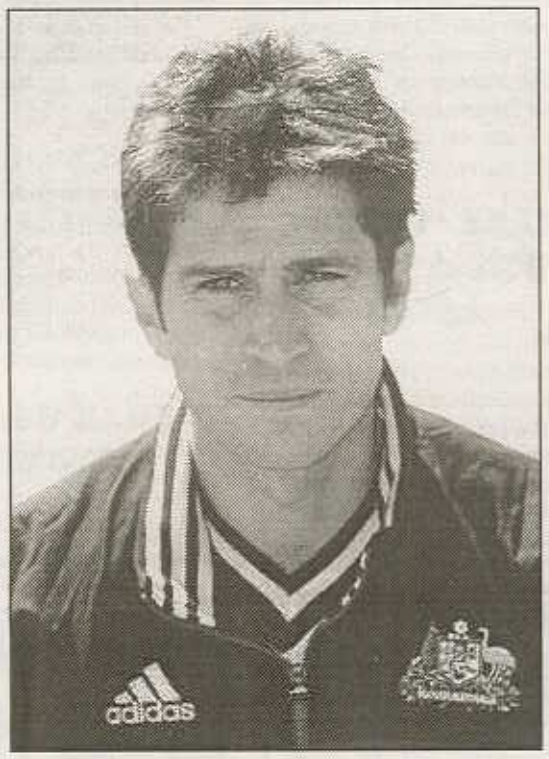
AUSTRALIA could be playing a match against England as early as next May in Cardiff.

National coach Frank Farina would like this friendly international to serve as a real warm-up for the coming Confederations Cup in Japan and Korea from May 30th to June 10.



Frank Farina: Australia to meet England.

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AUSTRALIA's first 2002 World Cup qualifiers are expected to be staged at Coffs Harbour, the northern coastal centre of NSW next April.

The World Cup qualifying tournament will include Fiji, Samoa, American Samoa as well as Tonga.

The tournament will start on April 8th and end on the 20th.

The International Sports Centre at Coffs Harbour has been found to have an excellent surface, accommodation plus first class facilities.

●●●●

WHO is the troubled journalist that owes a player the sum of $3,000?

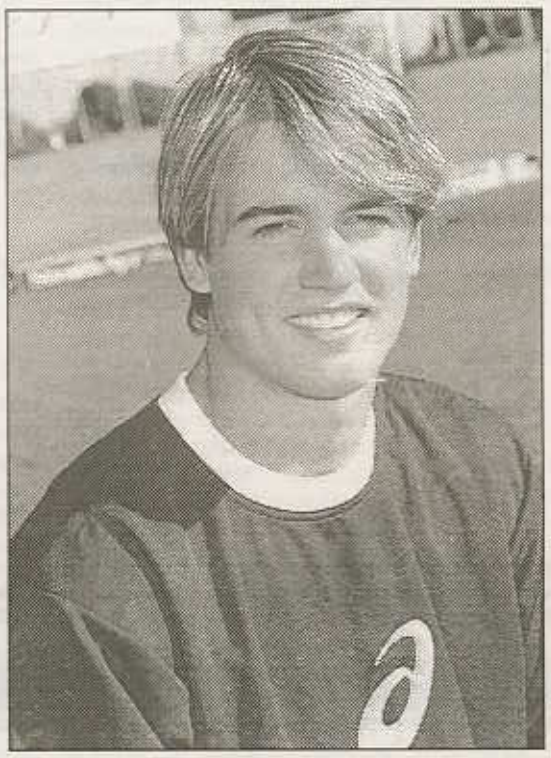
Most unfortunately, for the NSL player, the so-called journalist has lately disappeared into thin air.

This has now left the player, badly 'stranded down the wicket' for his 'three kilos' which right now he urgently needs.

●●●●

JOEL GRIFFITHS, the Parramatta Power's mobile blond striker, proved a real hero for his side last Friday night in Auckland.

The grafting Griffiths found the target in the 20th minute that gave the Power its first ever win over the Kingz.



Joel Griffiths: The Power's sole goalscorer last Friday night.

The Power beat the Kingz 0-1 to grab all three precious League points.

Last season the Kingz twice beat the Power, 4-0 in New Zealand and 1-2 in the return match at the Parramatta Stadium.

●●●●

JAMIE HARNWELL, the Perth Glory's tenacious goalscoring central marker, has re-signed for an extended two year contract with the Club late last week.

The harrassing Harnwell stated to the media:

"I'm thrilled to have re-signed with the Perth Club, but I still have ambitions of playing overseas."

Meanwhile Bernd Stange the Glory's coach, stated:

"Whilst Harnwell is not one of our most skilled players, he certainly gives 100%, passion and commitment to the Glory."

●●●●

ANDREW MARTH, the NSL's toughest midfielder, last Friday afternoon officially moved from the ostracised Carlton side to return to his old club, the Melbourne Knights.

Following the enforcing Marth from Carlton to the Knights, were international sweeper Steve Horvatt and midfield-playmaker Lubo Lapsansky.

Andrew Marth: The Knights' 'new' enforcing captain.

Marth was instantly appointed as the Knights' new captain.

Last Friday night, in the Knights' away match against Adelaide City, the marauding Marth scored from the penalty spot two minutes before the break.

All three former Carlton players played for the Knights last Friday night at the Hindmarsh Stadium against Adelaide City.

'GOOD OIL' would like to take this opportunity to wish all its valued readers a Safe and Healthy New Year.

Please drive carefully over the holiday break and we'll see you next year.

'Bon Compliano'.

Jamie Harnwell: Has extended his contract with the Glory.

Ian Knop: Former Canberra Cosmos chairman shooting for the top spot at Soccer Australia.

Paul Okon: Australia's World Cup captain.

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OFF THE CROSSBAR

— By Allan Crisp

NO BREAKAWAY INTENTIONS

Adelaide-based Andrew Haralambopoulos is the driving force behind the proposal to form a National Soccer League second division.

A former West Adelaide player and current secretary of newly promoted SA Premier League club Olympic Football Club, Haralambopoulos is passionate about the project as he unveiled his blueprint to form a league carrying the United Soccer League of Australia banner.

But, Haralambopoulos is disturbed by the initial reaction to his plan and disputes claims that the USLA is a breakaway movement.

"One of the key issues that all the clubs have said to us is that if they come in, they want assurances from Soccer Australia that the pathway be set so that all clubs entering the NSL must come through this league," Haralambopoulos said.

Under those circumstances, the USLA can't be regarded as a breakaway in any way shape or form."

As reported in ABSW (December 19/200) by Victorian editor Bert van Berdaf, the USLA would be divided into northern and southern conferences, comprising representation from NSW, Canberra, Brisbane and the Gold Coast (Northern) and with Victoria, WA and SA flying the Southern flag.

Haralambopoulos said the principle behind the proposed league was that it would be sanctioned by Soccer Australia and have the blessing of the respective interstate federations.

"The idea was to firstly approach the clubs to see what interest there was to see if it was worth pursuing and if there was not enough interest, we would not continue.

"But the interest was quite high right across, with the exception of Preston, a composite side from Tasmania and Newcastle, all of whom said they did not have the resourses to proceed," Haralambopoulos said.

"We do not regard the USLA as a breakaway movement because the whole premise behind the move is to conduct it through Soccer Australia.

"I don't think that clubs are going to risk what they are currently doing and where they are placed at the moment to create this league.

"Rather they will want to do it as part of the normal establishment, and that to me is just common sense.

"Clubs coming through from the second division must meet the NSL criteria so that there is no watering down of standards."

Haralambopoulos wants his club (Olympic FC) and reigning Premier League champions Blue Eagles to represent SA, but has left the door open for other willing applicants.

"The idea is Olympic represents the western side of the River Torrens and Blue Eagles the eastern," he said.

Newly badged Playford City Patriots (formerly Elizabeth City Rams) would be a welcome addition to the concept, should SA support three teams.

Haralambopoulos already has 17 clubs expressing "really keen" interest, with half of that number being former NSL clubs.

Heidelberg, Sunshine George Cross and Green Gully (Victoria) and Leichhardt Tigers (NSW) and Brisbane clubs Lions and City have signaled interest, while clubs cut from the NSL when the league is culled to 12, would be welcome to join.

"The USLA will be for teams which have gone as far as they can in their local competitions and want the challenge of a higher level.

"It (the second division) will get them ready for the NSL, it that's what they aspire to."

The Haralambopoulos plan is to employ a salary cap of $300,000 within an overall budget of $600,000.

The clubs would need to pay an annual $300,000 affiliation fee and a license fee of $100,000, to be spread over 10 years.

It is proposed that the USLA would act as a conduit to the NSL with relegation and promotion proposed to begin in two years.

Haralambopoulos has contacted Soccer Australia chairman Basil Scarsella, who has agreed to meet with him before his term in office expires in February.

JAKE "LEEDS" CECILIA TO THE ALTAR

When you are a first team regular at Leeds United it's essential to put forward a plausible case to manager David O'Leary to gain time off during the Premier League season.

A couple of weekends ago, new Leeds midfielder Jacob Burns succeeded in that quest where his fellow Aussie team mates, Harry Kewell and Mark Viduka had so often tried and failed.

Jacob Burns: Recently married.

Burns, who signed a $500,000 contract to join Leeds from Parramatta Power in September, briefly put his professional career on hold to fly to Adelaide to marry local girl Cecilia DePasquale at Sacred Heart College Chapel, Somerton Park.

The love match began two years ago when Burns was a visiting Sydney United player strolling the Rundle Mall shopping complex.

Cecilia, a linguistics graduate and Jacob met, exchanged phone numbers in the Mall and not only their mobiles clicked.

"We kind of knew from the beginning that it was something special," she said. "Jake is a terrific guy and we're so excited about the life we are going to have together."

Burns proposed to Cecilia before the offer to train with Leeds eventuated. "We had no idea how our lives would change," Burns said.

Now a $900,000 a year contracted player with Leeds, Burns has returned to his first love (football) and has a life-time partner with which to share the glory.

SILLY SEASON SWINGS

The close-season, or "silly season" as it is more accurately known, is in full unpredictable mode.

Port Lion Pirates look resigned to losing Steve DeGioviannello and Dino Sordillo to Metro Stars, but is preparing to seek tribunal assistance over the matter of Birkalla seeking the release of Jimmy Tsekinis and Peter Mihalopoulos.

Meanwhile Stavros Parissos is heading to Olympic FC, but Shane Maycock has returned from Argentina, while Chris Alagich is back home with Port after a spell with the Northern Demons.

The Pirates gain another boost with polished defender Scott Carey back in the fold after taking a year off to delve into the study books.

The Pirates are gearing to participate in the new 2001 Summer Series after keeping a summer night competition rolling for a commendable eight seasons.

KINGS TO STRIKE

Croydon Kings coach Phil Scardigno has picked up fine strikers in Adrian Iandiorio and Jim Stavridis to compensate for the loss of Joel Porter (Melbourne Knights) and Darren Jones, who has not resumed training.

Damian DiMella is overseas and in doubt for the Summer Series, but Paul Hoey is recovering from a knee reconstruction and has again hit the Polonia Reserve track.

The 5RPH (1197am) Breakfast Soccer Show crew (John Perin, Robbie Popplestone, Meno Toutsidis and Allan Crisp are taking Boxing Day off, but will resume their bare knuckle program on Tuesday, January 2, 2001.

WOLLONGONG NEWS

By Otto Bader

Promotion Idea — Wolves director of promotions and public relations John Lambert — the Unanderra business man — came up with a tremendous idea.

The fans are given the chance to air their opinion and views concerning all aspects of the Wolves club, from the move to WIN Stadium to team performance and other activities.

A meeting organised last week at the Fraternity club was attended by over 60 people.

It was proposed to form a Supporters club and arranged regular meetings during the year. The next public meeting for all soccer supporters is set for 6th February 2001.

■■■■

PNG for the Wolves — The Boys have to travel to Papua New Guinea to take part in the World Club Championship to start on January 9th, running for 12 days. Two club representatives are checking things out at present to report back to coach Ron Corry what to expect.

One has to question the wisdom of staging the Oceania Club Championship in PNG, a country experimenting difficulties to establish an economic and democratic community with all people living in Harmony. The reports coming to the notice of the outside world, do not guarantee confidence in conditions for visitors.

Hopefully the local soccer hierarchy is able to handle the organisation of the tournament without any disturbance.

The health and security of all teams must be assured. On first look playing in PNG smells like a political decision, not in the interest of soccer in general.

Fancy being told just three weeks in advance of the fixture to be played in PNG, leaving not much time to prepare. A decision should have been known months in advance.

■■■■

Youth Grade back on track — The Wolves youngsters came good again against Sydney United winning 3-0. Striker Jay Lucas, just back from U/17 national duties, scored the first one for Wollongong, followed by a penalty from Chad Bishop and Daniel Aldridge with the third goal.

Coach Eddie Tesoro looked much happier afterwards. Three of his youngsters have been selected for the senior squad to travel in January to PNG with keeper Scott Whalan, striker Andrew Smith, Daniel Aldridge plus striker Jay Lucas (who already had first grade experience) joining Steve Dimitrievski as well as George Nohra and Paul O'Grady.

A squad of 22 is making the trip with seven games in 13 days, giving the coach to rotate players as he sees fit.

■■■■

Striker signed — Paul Harris (23) has signed with the Wolves having impressed the coaching staff. He spent time in England with Carlisle United and trials with Crystal Palace. He returned two weeks ago and has been training with the Wolves, ready to take his chance if selected into the first grade side.

■■■■

Football Codes — The only proper football code is soccer, despite several others like the Americans with Gridiron, the Aussie-Rules and Rugby League riding on the name.

It is surprising to read that the countries leading television stations invest mega-bucks in dead-end sports to boost their ratings.

It is about time that someone talks with Channel Seven and points out the way to gain ratings is to promote soccer in prime time.

■■■■

Illawarra Junior Soccer — For the 9000 or more youngsters to register next year the Registration dates for the 2001 season are 10th, 17th and 24th February.

Individual clubs will advertise the locations of registrations. The next General Meeting is set down for Wednesday 31st January 2001.

■■■■

Search for Players — The rumour mill in Illawarra Soccer is roaring with players joining various clubs. Looking at Kemblawarra, fifth last season with coach John Fleming re-appointed, seemed to have tightened their budget with talks that several key players left for greener pastures.

The coach is searching the market to sign a number of new players. Kemblawarra is not the only club shedding players. Northern United, last season eighth in the competition, are reported having lost seven key personnel. Even premiers Port Kembla are supposed to lose a couple of regulars however coach Adrian Alston will have no trouble to attract replacements.

First Division clubs promoted to the top league will find the going tough in a world where the dollar reigns. All sides are willing and eager to improve, creating a healthy soccer competition, growing stronger every year, overtaking gradually other so-called football codes in Illawarra.

PNG TO HOST OCEANIA CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Oceania Football Confederation (OFC) said last week Port Moresby would host the 2001 OFC Club Championship.

The winner of the final will represent the OFC at the FIFA World Club Championship in Spain starting on July 30.

The championship competition runs from January 9 to 22. It will involve two groups playing each other in a round-robin competition.

The top two teams in each group will advance to the semi-finals.

David Wells from the New Zealand Turf Institute visited Port Moresby from December 10 to 14 and carried out immediate remedial work on the grounds and advised on further works.

The tournament will be at the Lloyd Robson Stadium.

Matt Horsley: Wollongong captain.

Ron Corry: Wollongong coach.

Wells concluded that the grounds would be ready for the January 9 kick-off, the OFC statement said.

The Papua New Guinea Football Association has already spent A$24,000 (US$13,000) to upgrade the pitch, stadium lights and facilities.

THE COMPETING CLUBS ARE:

Group A: Wollongong Wolves (Australia), Foodtown Warriors (Fiji), Napier City Rovers (New Zealand), Unitech FC (Papua New Guinea), Laugu United FC (Solomon Islands), Lotoha'pai FC (Tonga);
Group B: Pansa FC (American Samoa), Tupapa FC (Cook Islands), Titavi FC (Samoa), AS Venus (Tahiti), Tafea FC (Vanuatu).

GIVING RACISM A RED CARD

Australia by and large is a tolerant society, but that does not mean it can afford to turn a blind eye to the odd incident of racism outside and on the field. Victorian editor* Bert van Bedaf *takes a look at some incidents of racial vilification in Victoria and reports on the codes adopted to deter it.

Soccer has only to blame itself when the so-called "mainstream" media enjoy another soccer-bashing feast, as they descend like vultures on the carcass of another "ethnic" clash at a soccer stadium in Sydney or Melbourne.

It's the quickest way of stereotyping and reinforcing the perception of soccer as a foreign sport in Australia. Ethnic soccer violence is shorthand for bad crowd, bad sport.

Clubs have been axed from the national soccer league because of it as well as for other reasons. Some NSL clubs were forced to change their name not so long ago. Names such as Croatia or Hellas were outlawed. Marconi was allowed to stay, because, after all, he was the inventor of radio and a world figure. Olympic was OK too, because, well, the games were coming to Sydney.

Ethnic flags were also banned as were ethnic symbols or colors in logos.

Someone with a sharp eye on history and sardonic wit, coined the phrase "ethnic cleansing" as former Soccer Australia chairman David Hill set about creating Australian soccer in his own Anglo-centric mainstream image.

At a Macedonian function a Melbourne journalist, who passed away a few years ago, once described Hill as akin to a racist because of his actions.

The journalist received a standing ovation, so deep-seated were the emotional injuries inflicted during the Hill reign.

It is an odd thing about racism. It depends on which side of the fence you're standing, because, as is the case with other forms of violence, those dishing it out never see anything wrong with it.

Racism hasn't starved to death under the recent era and a regime of political correctness. Quite the opposite. It festered beneath the skin of society. It found its political voice in Pauline Hanson.

In contrast what people might think. Ms Hanson was a gift in disguise.

Her outbursts enabled Australia to take stock and lance the racist boil.

People are talking about racism again and introducing codes in law and in sport to counteract it.

Anti-semitism as a form of racism against Jewish people has rarely abated. It surfaced in Melbourne earlier this year at matches in one of Victoria's lower leagues. Racist comments were "regular and increasingly common occurrences on the field at senior Ajax Maccabi matches", according to a report in the Australian Jewish News. The report also cited racist incidents against the club at Australian Rules football matches.

Anti-semitic abuse was levelled at Jewish football players. Maccabi's Asian soccer coach, Hanson Liu (an irony in name, if ever there was one) was subjected to racist slurs at several matches.

Club spokesman Harry Zaitman told the Jewish News racism pervaded most Provisional League games, because clubs had many different ethnic backgrounds.

"There are always racist comments in a lot of games. It doesn't matter whether you're Jewish or of any other nationality. There are always comments made. We focus on anti-semitism, but there are Yugoslavs having problems and Greeks. There are some huge fights," Zaitman said.

The Maccabi soccer club had a match abandoned against Braeside United last August because of alleged racist abuse against Liu. The matter was brought to the attention of the Victorian Soccer Federation by the club and ABSW. The federation has not yet responded to ABSW's approach.

The VSF has a Racial and Religious Vilification Code in place.

The objectives are "to promote FIFA's guiding principles of fair play and ethical conduct to ensure a welcoming environment for everyone to enjoy the game of soccer regardless of their race, color, descent or ancestry, national or ethnic origin or religious belief or activity.

"To eliminate, as far as possible, racial and religious vilification in Victorian soccer amongst players, officials and spectators.

"To take active measures to educate and raise awareness about the damaging effects of racial and religious vilification on Victorian soccer, and of the benefits to be derived by taking positive action to eliminate it.

"To provide redress for people involved in Victorian soccer who have been the victim of racial and religious vilification in an orderly and expeditious manner and in accordance with the requirements of natural justice and procedural fairness," the code states it objectives.

VSF chief executive Geoff Miles described the code as "ground breaking".

"The grass roots code is ground breaking in that it is the first time any sport in Australia has tackled this issue at all levels of the sport.

We hope that our initiative will be a catalyst for the adoption of the code in other states and other sports," Miles said.

Melbourne Knights defender Ransford Banini has adopted a stoic demeanor in the face of racism.

"I've had a few run-ins with players. But they later apologised. There are supporters who'll try and put you off your game by shouting things. But I don't let it worry me. I just smile at them," Banini said.

The Australian and Victorian governments have adopted programs to counter racism in the community.

The Victorian government has released a discussion paper, called Racial and Religious Tolerance Discussion Paper and Draft Bill, with a view of introducing legislation in parliament to protect Victorians from racial and religious abuse by next March.

Future legislation would make racial abuse a criminal offence, punishable by up to six months jail and/or heavy fines, for players, officials or clubs. The Maccabi example would come under the VSF code and future Victorian law.

The Australian government has brought into life the "Living in Harmony Initiative", which also attempts to stamp out racism on and off the field.

In Victoria, the initiative got a kick-start during the NSL's "Living in Harmony" round nine matches, which were dedicated to the theme "Give racism a red card".

Oceania champion South Melbourne beat Australian champion Wollongong Wolves 4-2 not only for valuable NSL points but also to claim the "Living in Harmony Cup", which now has a place in South's trophy cabinet.

Also, the workplace agreement (known as the NSL Collective Agreement) between the NSL and the Professional Footballers' Association includes the Australian Equal Opportunity Code, which "alerts all players and officials to the basic values of tolerance and the acceptance of others".

"The "Living in Harmony" initiative is an important step forward for Australian soccer. A sport with the global influences that football (soccer) possesses has significant responsibilities within the community," PFA executive Brendan Schwab said.

"Soccer is about bringing people together for friendship. It's about providing entertainment for the family as a whole. It's also about the spirit of competition. The NSL is proud to be involved with bringing these elements to the attention of the fans," NSL general manager Stefan Kamasz said.

Ransford Banini: Smiles at fans who shout derogatory words at him.

How important anti-racism programs are is evidenced in Europe, which is buckling under the biggest spate of race extremism since the end of the Second World War.

Serie A club Lazio, for example, suffers from a fanatical core of fascist extremists, called Ultras — and it is not the only extremists group in Italian football.

During a Champions League match, Lazio player Sinisa Mihajlovic recently called Arsenal's colored player Patrick Vieira a "Black Monkey", because the Arsenal forward had called Mihajlovic, of Serbian extraction, a "Gypsy Serb". Both remarks were considered derogatory and racist.

During an English Premier League match, a Leicester supporter shouted "kaffir" at black South-African Leeds player Lucas Radebe. The slur word was popular among the apartheid white South-Africans to describe their black countrymen.

"It's a game of football," Radebe, from Johannesburg's Soweto town, said. "You win or you lose. Why must the color of a man's skin come into it?"

Why, indeed? Fortunately, you'd expect Australia to be big and generous enough to absorb the racist blows and provide a healthy response to them.

In this country deeds always ring louder than words and a person's achievements are respected, regardless of the color of skin, cultural heritage or religion.

Nevertheless, it's probably prudent to have vilification codes in place.

Just in case.

> *"I've had a few run-ins with players. But they later apologised. There are supporters who'll try and put you off your game by shouting things. But I don't let it worry me. I just smile at them"* — **Banini.**

Francis Awarifete: One of the longest serving players still in the NSL.

UNITED PLAN TO REPLACE CARLTON WITH FRIENDLY

Newcastle News

By Greg Danvers

With Carlton now gone Lloyd Scott Newcastle United is working on bringing an international or invitational side to Newcastle to fill the void created by the Bye.

Newcastle was to play Carlton at Marathon Stadium on Friday 6 April 2001.

"We have budgeted for using Marathon Stadium on April 6 and don't want to miss the opportunity to use the ground and boost the club's finances and support," Newcastle United general manager Jock Graham said.

"I'm sure football supporters in the Hunter Valley would be interested in seeing how we perform against overseas opposition and would support the concept."

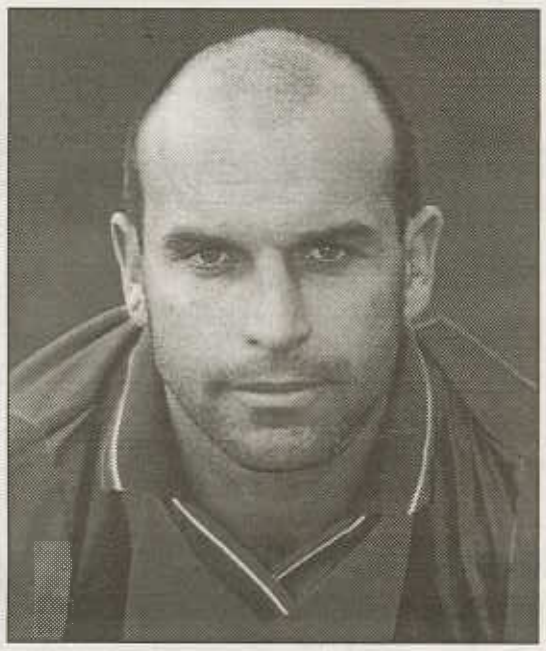
★★★

Esala Masi: Newcastle United's proud father.

United have a new addition to the family with Narelle Masi giving birth to a bouncing baby girl, Portia, last week with dad Esala a very happy chappie.

"I'm starting to learn what life is now all about," beamed the proud dad.

★★★



Andy Harper: Newcastle United's striker set to return against Sydney United.

Masi and Andy Harper will be available, providing they stand up to the rigours of full training, for the Sydney United match and Glenn Sprod (broken nose) and Andy Roberts (dislocated jaw and broken tooth) have that extra week to recover with the Carlton match cancelled.

"I had my first full training session last night," Masi said last Wednesday.

"And with a week's break I'll be doing extra sessions to bring up my fitness levels."

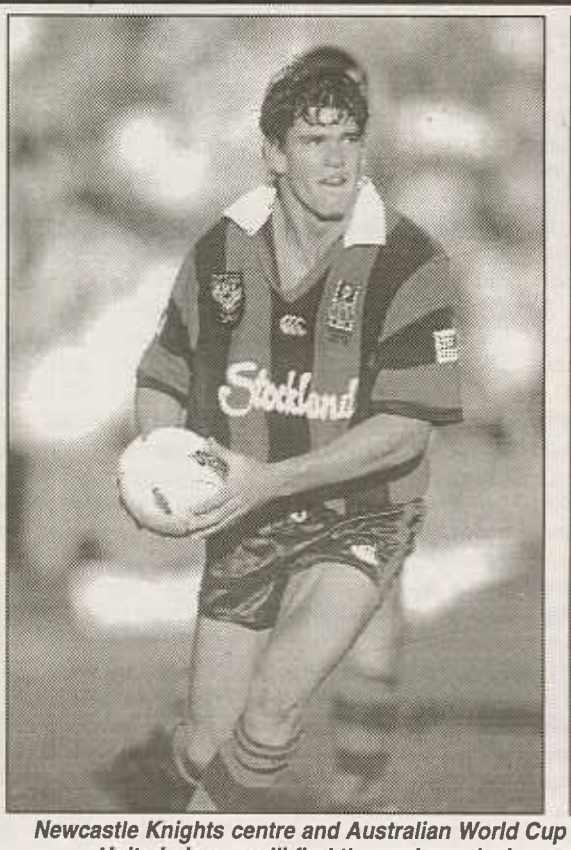
★★★

United has moved off Marathon Stadium, for training, for a couple of weeks as the ground is being cored and top-dressed.

The team will train at Ray Watt Oval at the University of Newcastle.

Their next training session on Marathon will be Thursday in a final run before the Sydney United match.

★★★



Newcastle Knights centre and Australian World Cup international Matthew Gidley (left) and Newcastle United players will find themselves playing on the same ground less than 48 hours apart.

The National Rugby League has released their official draw for the 2001 season with only one clash in the rounds.

United play Adelaide Force on Friday 9 March 2001 at Marathon Stadium while the Knights are scheduled to play the Parramatta Eels on the same weekend at home.

It will be interesting to see if the venue can be turned around from a Friday in Football mode to a Sunday in League mode.

As the saying goes 'nothing is impossible".

★★★

Coach Lee Sterrey will bring the scales to training tonight (Boxing Day) to measure how much Christmas pudding the lads had consumed over the festive season.

Lee Sterrey: United coach.

As the saying goes 'nothing is impossible".

"I'll be particularly happy if he doesn't put me on them," Assistant coach David Lowe quipped.

"It's not going to be a long enough break, two or three days, for the guys to put on too much weight.

"They might put on a kilo or so but I'm sure they will have well and truly run it off by the time we front up against Sydney United."

David Lowe: Newcastle United assistant coach.

Letters to the Editor

AFL'S LOSS SHOULD BE NSL'S GAIN

Dear Sir,

Great news for Soccer, the loss of AFL at Channel Seven should mean a revolution in coverage of our great game. If the twits in management at the network get a wake up call it could be the long term ratings and profitability boost for that network this shareholder has been looking forward to.

But they are just as likely to call in Melor and Scullino as consultants!

Interesting to read the developments in Queensland Soccer in your Strikers report. Wal Dann has been a worthy President and has worked to get the QSF more representative.

Country and regional associations have toiled for years to break the domination of the games administration by some of the XXXX clubs. Even with voting reform, it has taken until now to break their hold on the Executive power.

Providing the Q.S.F can now see that their job is Queensland Soccer and the Strikers board's job is putting bums on seats at Ballymore and they stay out of each others business, the game must benefit.

First suggestion Clem, how about any night other than Saturday. That and Suncorp are proven failures.

Tony Martin
Mountain Creek, QLD

SUPER SERMANNI MOST LOYAL TO CANBERRA

By Graham Cooke

When Tom Sermanni became the longest-serving coach of Canberra Cosmos earlier this month, it was just another milestone in a number he has set in an almost 20-year association with soccer in the National Capital.

He also holds the record for the longest stint at the helm of the Cosmos' predecessor as the city's major club, which began as Canberra City in 1977, and through a number of name and ownership changes ended as Canberra Deakin when it was finally ejected from the NSW League in 1994.

His two periods in charge, between 1987 and 1991, also marked the end of a lengthy playing association with the club. This began in the early 1980s and involved 175 National Soccer League and NSW League appearances — a total bettered only by veteran defender Andrew Young.

While Sermanni has had other jobs — an assistant at the Australian Institute of Sport, in charge of Sydney Olympic, national women's coach and deputy to Eddie Thomson at Hiroshima in the J League - he has never broken his links with Canberra and is probably the figure most identified with the code in the National Capital.

Tom Sermanni: Long serving coach of Canberra Cosmos.

STRIKERS SECURE UNION BASE BALLYMORE AS NEW VENUE

By Glenn Davis

Brisbane Strikers place in next season's revamped National Soccer League received another timely boost with a two-year deal to play at the home of rugby at Brisbane's Ballymore from next year.

The Strikers will play their last game at Suncorp Metway, previously known as Lang Park, on December 30 against Adelaide City.

All Strikers' games for the remainder of this season from February next year will be played at Ballymore.

The new home ground was the second good news for the club in less than a week after the club received a $250,000 sponsorship from the Clem Jones Group.

The new venue and the mammoth sponsorship deal has shored up the Strikers' chances of meeting Socer Australia's strict criteria for next season's NSL which will be culled from 16 teams to 12.

Strikers' chairman Ross Melville said the club had also secured an option to play all its games until mid-2003 at Ballymore.

A home game in early January scheduled for Suncorp Stadium has been abandoned after a bid to rescue the Carlton soccer club from financial ruin was aborted.

"We're excited about the potential created by the move to Ballymore and I'm sure our supporters will be pleased with the facilities available to us," he said.

"The Strikers are confident they have a bright future at Ballymore."

Melville said in looking for a new venue, the club had considered a return to its original home at Perry Park but the ground did not meet NSL standards.

"We're very confident we can take the Strikers to a new era and perhaps with a little smaller venue we can create a greater atmosphere," he said.

He added if the experiment proved successful over the next two years "it would be unlikely we would change".

"The move to Ballymore gives us a greater capability to capture more corporate support and early indications are that they will be forthcoming," he said.

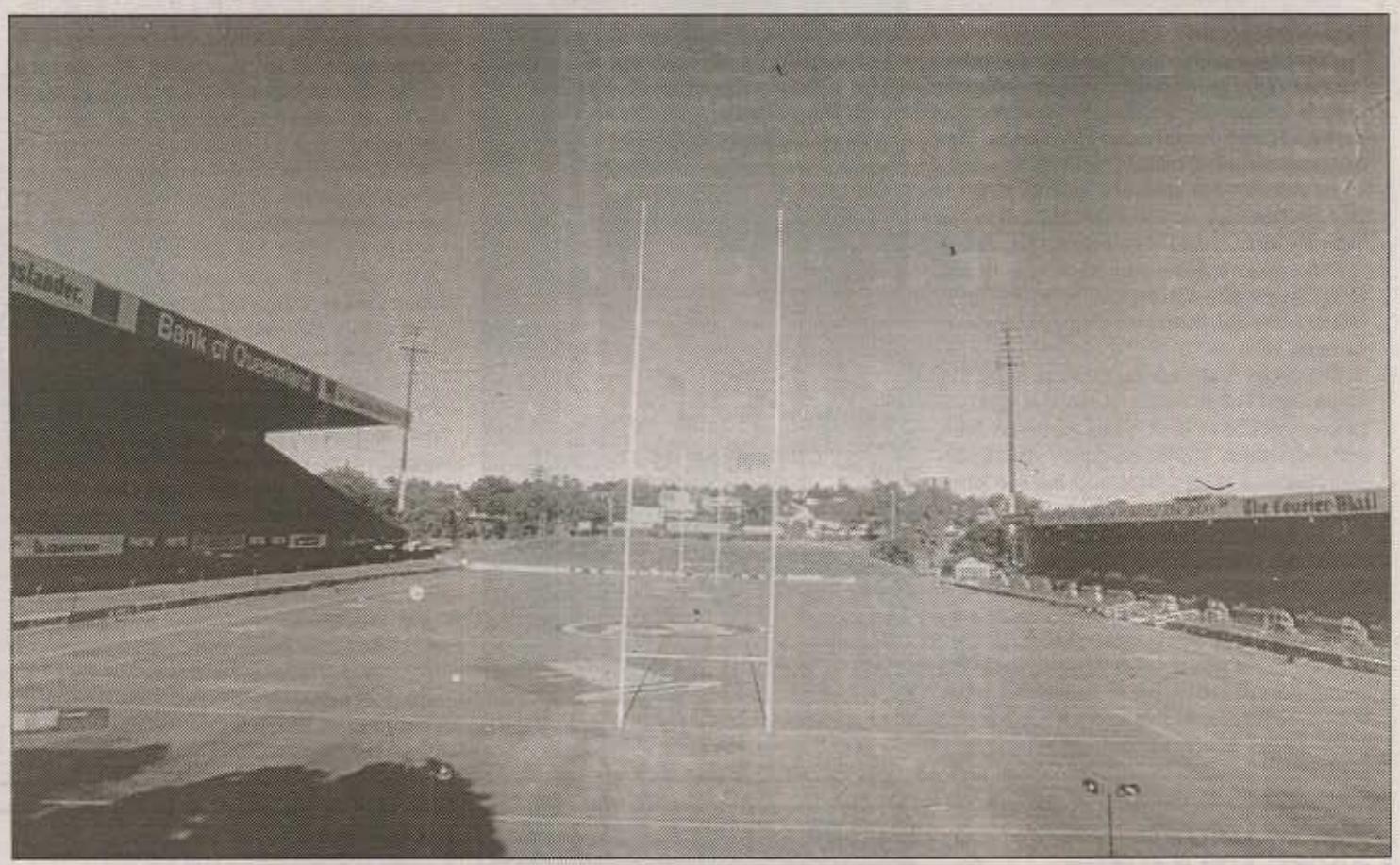
Jones, who is a current Strikers board member and shareholder, has been a life time supporter of Queensland soccer and has put in more than $400,000 into the Strikers' coffers over the past 12 months.

The deal throws another spoke in the wheels of the Queensland government's plans to redevelop Suncorp Metway stadium, the Strikers' current home, as a major stadium in time for the 2003 Rugby World Cup.

Queensland Rugby Union chief executive Steve Thornton said the Strikers had not deserted Suncorp Metway stadium because they were asked to find another venue for at least the next two years.

"It will be interesting to see what happens with the major stadium and where the Strikers go after that," he said.

"The long-term future for Ballymore is that it is first and foremost a rugby ground, we're not changing that, we're actually providing an opportunity for a summer tenant."



Queensland Rugby Union base Ballymore will now become the home of the Brisbane Strikers for the next two years, starting from February.

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

Match Reports page 10 & 11

ABSW Player of the Year Points

ROUND ELEVEN

NORTHERN SPIRIT vs BRISBANE
3 - Langdon (NS)
2 - Burgess (NS)
1 - Dwyer (BS)

ADELAIDE CITY vs MELB KNIGHTS
3 - Veart (AC)
2 - Vidmar (AC)
1 - Marth (AC)

FOOTBALL KINGZ V P'MATTA POWER
3 - Griffiths (PP)
2 - Tobin (PP)
1 - Osman (FK)

PERTH GLORY V MARCONI
3 - Costanzo (MS)
2 - Farah (MS)
1 - Hamwell (PG)

EASTERN PRIDE V CANBERRA
3 - Roach (EP)
2 - Hutchinson (EP)
1 - Phillips (CC)

SYDNEY UNITED V SOUTH MELBOURNE
3 - Vlahos (SM)
2 - Boutsianis (SM)
1 - Younis (SU)

SYDNEY OLYMPIC V W'GONG WOLVES
3 - Kohler (SO)
2 - Ceccoli (WW)
1 - Carle (SO)

NEWCASTLE UNITED
BYE

The Progressive player points for the 2000/2001 ABSW Player of the Year award will be hidden with the winner to be released at season's end.

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 2
WOLLONGONG 2

By John Economos

With a minute to go and Olympic leading 2-1, Wollongong's mobile midfielder Scott Chipperfield brilliantly raced onto a very well measured flat through-ball from substitute Robbie Middleby to split Olympic's entire defence wide open and nail the target to earn Wollongong a very well earned 2-2 draw last Saturday night at the Belmore Sports Ground.

Wollongong's non-stop open attacking style pressured Olympic almost throughout the first half as the visitors dominated, leaving the home side clinging to the ropes.

Wollongong finally opened the score in the 21st minute after Olympic sweeper and captain Ante Juric fumbled that lead to Stuart Young scoring his fourth goal of the season. The Wolves captain Matt Horsley stole possession to put a flat through ball into Young to finish.

Olympic twice came close to equalising in the first half through Liberian striker, Mass Sarr who shaved the right upright with a ruthless left fotted low drive whilst central marker Scott Baillie deflected with his shoulder just over Wollongongís cross-bar.

Olympic finally equalised in the 62nd minute following a cross from the left by midfielder Lindsay Wilson. Baillie rose well above the Wolves' defence to power a brilliant looping header into the target.

Stuart Young: Scored his 4th goal of the Season.

The goal ignited Olympic into life and had Wollongong back-pedalling for the next 10 minutes.

Olympic finally took the lead in the 76th minute through industrious midfielder Paul Kohler. The underrated Kohler volleyed a Wollongong goalmouth clearance following a Pablo Cardozo free kick fired in from the left.

Olympic seemed shell shocked in the first session by the enormous pressure thrust at them by Wollongong.

It's only in the second half that Olympic was able to regain composure in the midfield to claw back some authority in this battle.

Olympic's highly ball-skilled linkman, Nicky Carle, together with some quality crossings from left flanker Lindsay Wilson and the powerful work rate of industrious midfielder Paul Kohler hugely contributed to the home side's comeback.

Five minutes from the bell Olympic had threatened to further their lead when diminutive midfield substitute Franco Parisi hit the base of the right upright.

After the match, the home team's coach Branko Culina stated: "The first half Wollongong was on top of us but in the second half, it was different and a bit disappointed we didn't get three points. However I was not to overly disappointed in not winning."

The Wollongong's coach and former Australian world Cup ëkeeper Ronnie Corry, and far from being happy, was short, blunt and brief as he spat out: "The first half we were all over them and I'm sick and tired of being told we were lucky. But we will be there in the end, luck or no luck."

Nick Carle: Outstanding exhibition with his ball skills.

SOUTH UNITED 0
SOUTH MELBOURNE 3

Sydney United's unbeaten home run at Edensor Park this season was brought to an abrupt end last Saturday night as the inform South Melbourne clinically disposed of the Bravehearts 3-0.

South were dominant and showed the Bravehearts what is expected of a title contender as they return to the form which saw them win two straight league titles in the late 90's.

The first 25 minutes were tight, with both teams creating some golden chances, however when the league's joint top scorer Andy Vlahos sneaked in to give the visitors a 1-0 lead, the wind seemed to have been taken out of United's sails.

Andy Vlahos: Scored his seventh goal of the season against Sydney United.

Vaughan Coveny: Scored the second against United.

A beautifully worked free-kick by Con Boutsianis, who crossed the ball to the back post, found youngster Patrick Kisnorbo who headed the ball down into the path of Vlahos who made no mistake.

Four minutes from the end of the half, the match was seemingly over as a contest after New Zealand international Vaughan Coveny converted after a marvellous through ball by Vlahos, which split the United defence.

In the second half both teams succumbed to giving away possession. Some inspired football by Ray Younis who went on a 60 metre stroll upfield only to have his shot thwarted by a South Melbourne defender was the best highlight for the home side.

In the 75th, the result was put beyond doubt following a mammoth clearance from keeper Michael Petkovic. The clearance found Zeljko Susa on his own to break away and calmly run into the box and make it 3-0.

ADELAIDE CITY 3
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 2

By Allan Crisp

Lucas Pantelis could not have chosen a more crucial occasion to score his first goal for Adelaide City Force than last Friday night when his 84th minute strike presented the home team with a thrilling 3-2 win over Melbourne Knights.

Aurelio Vidmar and Scott Tunbridge gave the Force a runaway 2-0 lead in an opening 17 minute onslaught, before the Andrew Marth-inspired Knights fought back to level 15 minutes from the final whistle.

Marth was given the captain's arm band for his former club, while fellow Carlton castaway Steve Horvat started in the heart of the Knights defence, with the third ex-Blues star Lubo Lapsansky replacing Adrian Cervinski at the start of the second half.

Andrew Marth: Scored from the penalty spot in his return for the Melbourne Knights.

Lucas Pantelis: Scored the winner.

City broke through first in the fifth minute as a Gianluca Lagati cross from the right was nodded on by Pantelis for captain Vidmar to bury the ball past Lupce Acevski in the Knights goal.

Vidmar was the provider for the second goal, slipping a great through pass for Tunbridge to leap to the top of City's goal chart with his fourth strike of the season.

City was reduced to 10 men two minutes before half time as Lagati was red carded for handling on the goalline and Marth counted from the resultant penalty kick.

Then seconds before the interval, the Knights had Jason Vukadin red carded for a second booking after a lengthy delay as referee Craig Zetter conferred with an assistant and the fourth official before reaching a verdict to expel the defender.

Former Adelaide Shark striker Joel Porter celebrated his return to Hindmarsh Stadium with a brilliantly struck equaliser for the Knights, but ex-Under 17 Joey, Pantelis had the final glorious say.

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

FOOTBALL KINGZ 0
PARRAMATTA POWER 1

A Joel Griffith goal after 18 minutes was enough to give the Parramatta Power their fourth straight victory and their first ever over the Football Kingz after last Friday securing a 1-0 win over the Auckland based side at Ericsson Stadium.

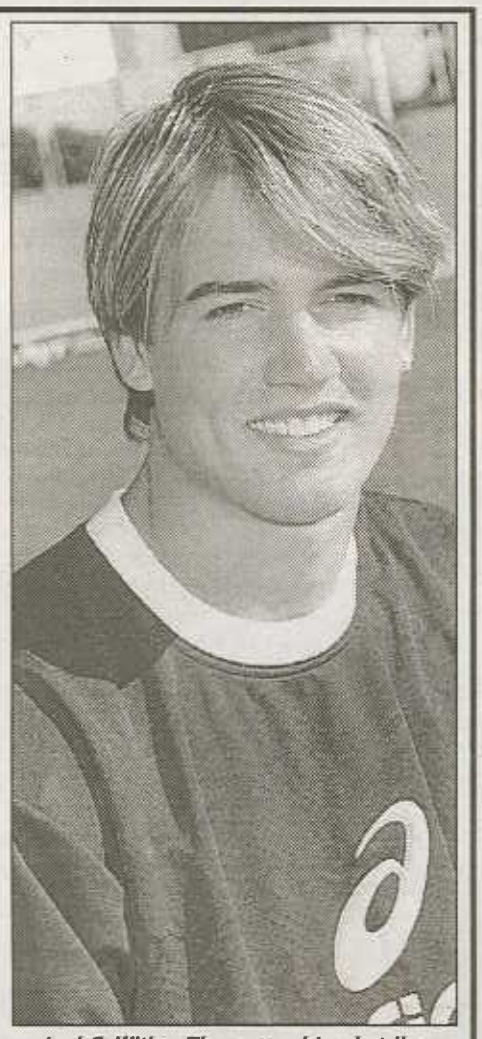
In an uninspiring match, Griffith's pounced on a mistake by Kingz sweeper Levent Osman to calmly slot the ball past Kingz custodian Chris Marsh.

The Kingz looked disjointed for much of the first half, particularly during a 10-minute horror spell in which Griffith's scored the winner.

Osman casually gathered the ball outside the box and dithered with possession before realising he had no support from any other Kingz defenders.

He tried to hurriedly send a long ball up the park but Griffiths, the young blonde striker who had chased the loose ball hard, raised his foot and blocked the intended clearance.

Levent Osman: His mistake costing the Kingz more points.



Joel Griffiths: The young blond striker scored a great goal to secure Parramatta's first ever win over the Kingz.

Kingz 'keeper Marsh, who had ventured out to the very left of the goal box to support Osman, could only watch in horror as the ball dribbled past him and into the far right-hand side of the net to put the Power ahead.

The incident seemed to send the Kingz defence into panic.

Minutes later Marsh came off his line to try and gather in a cross but fumbled the ball and the Kingz were lucky to not go two down in the ensuing goal mouth melee.

The Kingz sink into the depths of 12th on the ladder, after securing just three points from their last nine games.

Following a 2-1 loss at home and a 4-0 hiding in Auckland last season, Parramatta will be happy to get the Kingz monkey off their back whilst the Kingz can only wish for a better new year.

PERTH GLORY 0
MARCONI STALLIONS 1

By Richard Kreider

Diminutive midfielder James Afkos erased much of the nightmare of missing a deciding penalty for Perth Glory during last season's incredible NSL Championship grand final against Wollongong Wolves, by scoring his first NSL goal for Marconi Stallions last Saturday; ironically, against his former club at Perth Oval.

"We couldn't find our rhythmn and lacked leadership," said Glory coach Bernd Stange. "It may have stopped our unbeaten home record but it's not the end of the road."

Afkos, the son of Glory deputy chairman Paul Afkos, scored the only goal of the game after half an hours play and as a reward, Stallions coach Eddi Krncevic allowed him to spend Christmas with his family in Perth.

"Certainly, Perth's loss is our gain," said Marconi coach Eddie Krncevic on Afkos, who turns 23 in a fortnight. "James is a wonderful character who is very well liked around the club," he said.

Perth had their chances to secure a better outcome, but lady luck was in no mood to hand out an early Christmas present. Similarly with previous encounters, the game was fiercely competitive but never spiteful. Damian Mori, who was marked out of most of the game, had his only real chance on goal in the 28th minutes from a Rob Trajkovski free kick, which he headed into David Aceski's side-netting.

Marconi responded moments later with what proved to be the winning goal when Ljubo Milicevic was left flat-footed to a Ange Costanzo through-ball which Afkos calmly, precisely and gleefully, drilled past Jason Petkovicsí left hand.

Understandably, the Perth side lifted their game after the goal, and spurred on by a healthy 13,813 crowd, looked more purposeful on the offensive, especially in the second half.

A 35 metre missile from Milicevic after 61 minutes was superbly stopped by Aceski, Scott Miller, Mori and substitute Alistair Edwards all lined up to score from close-range in the 80th minute but some courageous defending by the Stallions kept the ball out.

With a minute to go Jamie Harnwell thumped a header onto the crossbar and with it went any chance the home side had of securing a share of the points. Mori was forced from the field in the second minute of stoppage time with a gash to the forehead.

The visitorís came close to stretching their lead after 64 minutes when Kris Trajanovski forced Petkovic to make a stunning save.

Perth Glory's Jamie Harnwell (left) heads the ball from Marconi's Angelo Costanzo as Glory teammate Ljubo Milicevic watches on.

EASTERN PRIDE 3
CANBERRA COSMOS 1

By Jodie Newell

Eastern Pride won its first game of the NSL season with a superb double from English import Neville Roach, whilst Adam Griffiths chipped in with a single as the Pride defeated Canberra 3-1 at Mobil Park.

The scoring opened in the 35th minute as the home side took the lead through Roach, who caught Cosmos keeper Angelo Konstantinou off his line during a Pride move forward.

Roach saw the opening and drove the ball past the keeper and into the net.

Roach made it two after 44 minutes after receiving a pass from John Hutchinson, the powerful striker turned and drove a powerful shot past Konstantinou and into the net.

25 minutes into the second half, Adam Griffiths wrapped up the three points for the home side after he slotted home from close range following a goal-mouth scramble from a Marcus Stergiopoulos free kick.

The Cosmos salvaged a late consolation goal through forward Alex Castro, who found space inside the penalty area before beating keeper Bojo Jevdjevic. The final score 3-1 to Eastern Pride.

Jeff Hopkins: Praised his team for their first win this season.

Eastern Pride coach in Jeff Hopkins had nothing but praise for his team.

"It's been a hell of a tough stretch this losing streak, but to the lads credit, they toughed it out and earned a well deserved, well fought out victory".

Canberra coach Tom Sermanni also conceded, Pride deserved their victory.

"I thought our guys were a little flat, we arrived to the game late, but that's no excuse. "I'm not taking anything away from Eastern Pride, they outplayed us and we have to just work a little harder next game.

NORTHERN SPIRIT 1
BRISBANE STRIKERS 0

Northern Spirit maintained their unbeaten record at North Sydney Oval this season thanks to a goal from wonder import Ben Burgess on the hour mark as the Spirit defeated the Brisbane Strikers 1-0 last Friday evening.

Burgess bagged his seventh goal of the season, to join South Melbourne's Andy Vlahos as the NSL's top scorers to date.

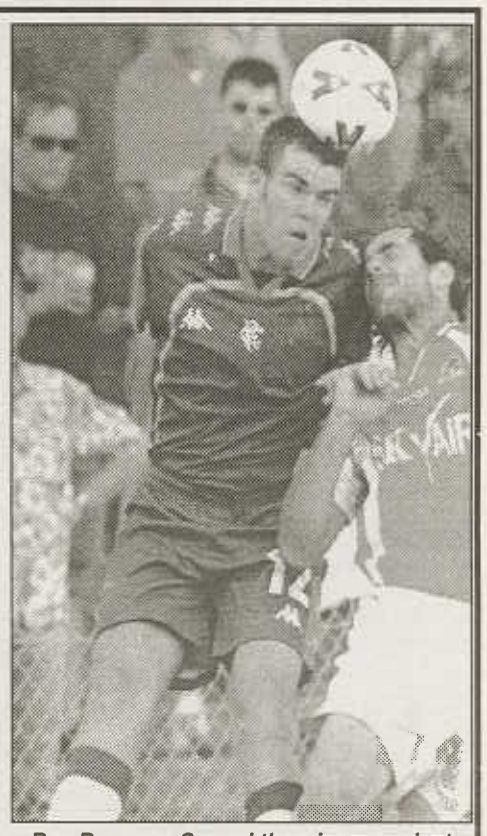
Spirit's third home win this season, was overshadowed by the club's second lowest ever home crowd, just 3,758 spectators turning out on a hot and humid Sydney night.

But 19-year-old Burgess, who has now scored seven of his teams 16 goals this season once again secured the three points with a neat finish on the hour mark.

Spirit's best on the night, midfielder Matthew Langdon turned provider as his cross-found Burgess who beat Brisbane keeper Daniel Duke at the right post.

The Strikers were limited to long range efforts with Jeromy Harris, Peter Dwyer and replacement Chay Hews all sending shots on target, only to find Paul Henderson on his guard.

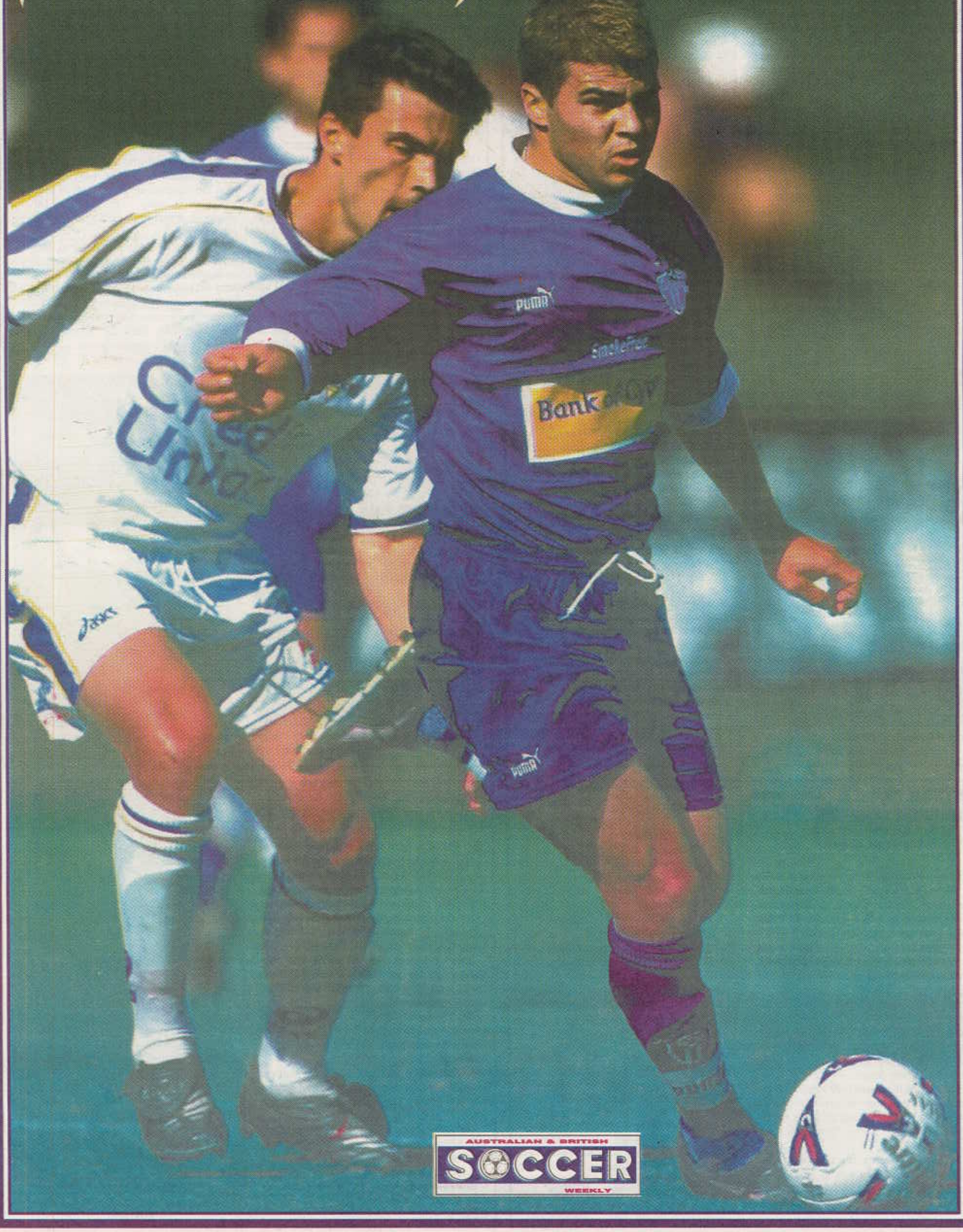
Brisbane stay third from bottom, with nine points from 11 matches while Spirit move further up the ladder.



Ben Burgess: Scored the winner against Brisbane.

ANDY VLAHOS

(South Melbourne)



SOUTHS AND OLYMPIC TO CLASH THIS SATURDAY

By John Economos

South Melbourne, the NSL's League leaders, are in serious preparation this week for Saturday night's Big Match against the visiting young and exciting Sydney Olympic at the Bob Jane Stadium which easily could see the 'House Full' sign go up for the first time this season.

Souths last Saturday night hungrily snapped up all three League points in their away-clash to Sydney United whilst in contrast Olympic were pegged back from a last minute 2-2 draw by the visiting and former League leaders, Wollongong Wolves.

Paul Trimboli: Souths' mercurial skipper in action.

Mickey Petersen, Souths' coach and former Australian international, in his playing days was the 'David Beckham' in Souths' midfield.

Jeff Kennett: Former Victorian Premier, V.I.P. guest at the match.

Petersen's long range accurate crosses and lethal radar-like free kicks, yielded Souths many a goals.

As Souths' newly appointed coach this season, Petersen stated to ABSW last night: "Look, we are a very experienced side and a much older overall team than Olympic.

"I haven't seen much of Olympic so far this year but they seem to play an enthusiastic brand of football with an off-the-cuff style of game.

"They are a pretty young side and seem to favour a non stop attacking style," stated the former Souths star playmaker.

"Now that they have their stylish striker Pablo Cardozo back from Europe and in their firing line, Olympic looks even more dangerous.

"I can see this match as being one of experience verses youth.

"The Bob Jane Stadium has a capacity of around 14,000 and we are hoping for a 'full house' this Saturday night.

"We have no injuries and no suspensions so everybody will be available for selection for Saturday," stated Petersen.

When questioned for a match prediction, Petersen wisely came back with. "Look I've been around quite a while and I'm not too big on predictions. We must work really hard.

"I've been happy with our fitness levels which so far has been a telling factor, " ended Petersen.

In defence Souths rely on a 'flat-four' with David Clarkson, the fabulous

Ante Juric: Sydney Olympic captain.

Mehmet Durakovic, outstanding youngster Patrick Kisnorbo and Fausto De Amicis.

Souths are stacked with experienced attacking players, spearheaded by front runners Andy Vlahos and Vaughan Coveny.

This strike-line is strongly supported from behind by the genius of captain Paul Trimboli, the long-ranged firing power of Con Boutsianis and Zeljko Susa.

International goalkeeper, Michael Petkovic, has inspired Souths with his scintillating form so far this season.

Saturday's Big Match against Sydney Olympic will be Souths' last home game before the end of a most memorable year 2000.

The past year saw Souths honourably represent Australia, as well as Oceania, at FIFA's inaugural World Club Championships in Brazil.

Battle Preparation

Souths have already started to prepare for their battle against traditional rivals, Olympic, in earnest.

The odds could be stacked against the Sydney team.

Sydney Olympic has never won a match against Souths at the Bob Jane Stadium.

Since 1992, Souths has never lost to Olympic in Melbourne, whilst Olympic has failed to defeat Souths in the past nine games.

This match could in fact see the winner head into 2001 as the League leaders.

Clint Bolton: Olympic's oustanding goalkeeper.

Special guests have been invited to attend this Big Game.

Former Liberal Victorian Premier, Mr Jeff Kennett will be in attendance, as will Soccer Australia's Chairman, the newly appointed President of Oceania, Mr Basil Scarsella.

Not only will these two sides be competing for the three League points, but the winner will be the recipient the traditional 'Bank Of Cyprus Australia Cup'.

Two of the NSL's best inform goalkeepers will be in action, both internationals, with Michael Petkovic guarding Souths' goals whilst Olympic at the other end will have the powerful Clint Bolton.

Souths' experienced defence will again be marshalled by former international sweeper or marker, the evergreen Mehmet Durakovic.

The classy and durable Durakovic, who also had a stint with Olympic, will be making his 150th appearance for Souths this Saturday night.

The Youth match will kick off at 5pm.

Souths have organised for the children a Jumping Castle, Face Painters, Balloon modellers, Roving Band, cheer Girls plus a spectacular display of fireworks.

SOUTH MELBOURNE vs SYDNEY OLYMPIC

Saturday 30th December

BOB JANE STADIUM

MAIN GAME — KICK OFF 7.30PM

Michael Petkovic

Vaughan Coveny

COME WATCH

Paul Trimboli (captain)

Andy Vlahos

South Melbourne Extinguish

Mehmet Durakovic

Mickey Petersen (coach)

OLYMPIC'S FLAME

South Melbourne, is proudly sponsored by Bank of Cyprus Australia.

Letter to the Editor

PRIME TIME COVERAGE FOR SOCCER

Dear Sir,

Now that it look's like my Christmas wish has been granted with the New's Ltd. Consortium of Channel Nine and Ten, plus Foxtel and Telstra winning both the AFL and NRL football contracts, can Soccer Australia's bosses now please put pressure on Channel Seven to give Soccer fan's around the country a better deal.

With all this talk about restructuring of the game next season, it would be a good idea for Soccer Australia chiefs to talk with the Channel Seven Sport's executives about getting prime time free to air television coverage of our game.

Commercial Channel's are obviously driven by ratings, and according to the Seven Network, Soccer doesn't rate well enough for prime time viewing by mainstream Australians. That's where Seven's bosses may be able to help as far as the restructuring of Soccer's future in Australia goes, now that they are on their knee's and are more likely to listen as well as give advice.

As far as restructuring the competition goes, there has to be a lot more to it than just reducing the number of team's down to 12. It has to look at what the corporate sponsor's needs are, as well as what kind of programming the holders of TVs free to-air rights want as well.

It may be that Channel Seven may prefer a return to winter for soccer to compete against rival codes after the 2001 AFL season is completed. Obviously the contract right's would have to be looked at with the TV payment rights increased substantially for Soccer Australia to return the NSL to a winter format, to help club's pay for higher stadium rental's and other associated costs in transferring back to winter.

Of course restructuring could also mean a completely different format in future, where Soccer Australia forms it's own Super Twelve or Ten competition, based on state and territory names along with Pacific Island's national teams from the Oceania region, similar to rugby unions.

Maybe Kerry Stokes, the owner of Channel Seven can pitch in $100 million dollars to kick start it, as neither Soccer Australia or the State Federation's have that sort of money to invest.

But seriously, whatever restructuring is made or done for next season, Soccer Australia's officials will need to work with Channel Seven in future to get the best deal possible for the games long suffering fans, not just for their own personnel benefit.

With both Tony Labbozetta and Joseph Brondolino aspiring to be the new Soccer Chairman when they meet in February, I hope their is no conflict of interest with their club affiliation's if either one gets the job.

Finally if the competition stays in its club format for the foreseeable future, and the restructuring reduces it to 12 teams, then a Second Division is also needed, if it can be a viable proposition financially, with promotion and relegation.

Also if a Super Twelve was ever considered in future, it would need only one team each from the AFL states or WA, SA, Victoria and perhaps Tasmania.

There would be three in NSW (north NSW based in Newcastle, NSW based in Sydney and Southern NSW based in Wollongong or Shark Park).

One in the ACT, two from Qld, one in New Zealand, or two if Tasmania or North Qld isn't viable financially.

That makes 12 in all, with the option of adding Oceania Island countries when ready, to either expand the comp or take the place of non-viable states or teams in future.

One final point, if a return to a winter competition was ever contemplated (which I prefer) with Channel's Seven help and approval, it should run for eight playing month's, with a March to June first period, and resume in August through to November's finals.

July would be the break in between. That month could be altered to suit the World Cup year for TV viewing of course. That leaves December, January and February off the football calender, as it is to hot for players to perform at their best week in and week out, even on hot sticky humid nights.

Of course we will all have to wait another 14 days to see if Channel Seven actually loses the AFL rights for good. But with the amount of money thrown around by Rupert Murdock recently, I doubt that little Kerry Stokes will match News Ltd's sort of money. Well just have to wait and see what eventuates over the coming weeks.

Dominic Scullino,
Nerang. Qld

AUSSIE AROUND THE GLOBE

FA CUP 2nd Round

Danny Allsopp played a full game, as Notts County drew 1-1 away to Wigan, with a replay to be played later this week.

WORTHINGTON CUP Quarterfinals

LG Socceroo Stan Lazaridis played a full game, and picked up a caution in the 55th minute, as Birmingham City beat Sheffield Wednesday 2-0 at home, to set up a semi-final showdown with Ipswich town.

Stan Lazaridis: Into the Semi's of the Worthington Cup

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

Socceroo Danny Tiatto played a full game, as Manchester City drew 2-2 away to Aston Villa.

Socceroo John Aloisi was replaced in the 60th minute, as Coventry City lost 1-0 away to Derby County.

Socceroo Mark Viduka picked up a caution in the 51st minute, scored his team's second goal in the 77th minute from a Harry Kewell cross, and was replaced ten minutes later, while Kewell played a full game, as Leeds United beat Sunderland 2-0 at home.

Socceroo Mark Schwarzer (gk) played a full game and kept a clean sheet, while national team-mate Paul Okon was replaced in the 67th minute, as Middlesbrough beat Chelsea 1-0 at home.

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE DIV 1

John Filan (gk) remained on the bench, as Blackburn Rovers beat Burnley 2-0 away from home.

Socceroo Stan Lazaridis played a full game, as Birmingham City beat Wolverhampton Wanderers 1-0 away from home. For Wolves, LG Socceroo Kevin Muscat played a full game.

Socceroo Shaun Murphy played a full game, as Sheffield United drew 1-1 at home to Sheffield Wednesday.

Socceroo Jason van Blerk was replaced in the 51st minute, as West Bromwich Albion drew 3-3 away to Watford.

Jason Kearton (gk) played a full game, as Crewe Alexandra drew 1-1 at home with Crystal Palace.

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE DIV 2

Tim Cahill came off the bench in the 74th minute, as Millwall beat Walsall 2-0 at home.

Danny Allsopp played a full game and scored twice, the first in the 34th and the second, the matchwinner in the 88th , as Notts County beat Reading 3-2 at home.

Danny Invincibile scored the winner in the 57th minute, and was replaced in the 81st, as Swindon Town beat Rotheram 2-1 at home.

NATIONWIDELEAGUE DIV 3

Lee Howells played a full game, as Cheltenham lost 3-1 away to Cardiff.

CONFERENCE LEAGUE (ENGLISH NON-LEAGUE)

Scott Guyett played a full match, as Southport drew 2-2 away to Leigh.

Jon Brady played a full game, and opened the scoring in the 16th minute, Rushden & Diamonds going on to beat Hednesford 5-1 at home.

Vince Matassa (gk) played a full game, as Woking lost 3-1 away to Telford.

SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Socceroo Tony Vidmar was replaced in the 84th minute, as Rangers drew 1-1 away to Dundee United.

Socceroo Stuart Lovell played a full game, scored his team's opener in the 39th minute, and was one of the best on ground, as Hibernian beat St Johnstone 2-0 at home.

Chris Coyne played a full game, and received a yellow card in the 29th minute, as Dundee beat Kilmarnock 3-2 away from home.

BELGIAN 1ST DIVISION (EERSTE KLASSE)

Vilson Knezevic (gk) was replaced in the 25th minute, as Germinal Beerschot lost 3-1 away to Gent.

BELGIAN 2nd DIVISION (TWEEDE KLASSE)

Lorenz Kindtner played a full game, as Roeselare drew 1-1 at home with Deinze.

DUTCH 1ST DIVISION (KPN EREDIVISIE)

Socceroo Brett Emerton played a full game, as Feyenoord lost 1-0 away to Groningen.

Socceroo Zeljko Kalac (gk) played a full game and kept a clean sheet, as Roda JC beat NED 2-0 away from home.

Socceroo Brett Emerton played a full match, while national team-mate Stephen Laybutt remained on the bench, as Feyenoord beat Fortuna Sittard 4-2 away from home.

Socceroo Zeljko Kalac (gk) played a full game and kept a clean sheet, as Roda JC beat FC Twente 2-0 away from home.

FRENCH 1st DIVISION (LA CHAMPIONNAT)

Socceroo Mile Sterjovski came off the bench in the 66th minute, as Lille drew 1-1 away to Metz.

GERMAN 1ST DIVISION (BUNDESLIGA)

Socceroo Paul Agostino scored his sixteenth goal of the season in the 63rd minute, and was replaced in the 79th minute, while Ned Zelic played a full game, as 1860 Munich beat Hamburg 2-1 at home.

Paul Agostino: Australia's deadliest striker.

Socceroo David Zdrilic picked up a yellow card in the 41st minute, and was replaced in the 76th minute, as Unterhaching beat Eintracht Frankfurt 2-0 at home.

Socceroo Paul Agostino scored the matchwinner in the 67th minute before being replaced in the 72nd minute, with Ned Zelic also replaced, in the 17th minute, as 1860 Munich beat Cottbus 3-2 away from home.

Josip Simunic played a full game, and picked up a yellow card in the 28th minute, as Hertha Berlin lost 4-2 at home to Kaiserslautern.

Socceroo David Zdrilic played a full match, as Unterhaching lost 2-0 at home to Schalke.

GREEK 1ST DIVISION (HELLENIC 1ST DIVISION)

Kyriakos Tohouroglou (gk) played a full game, as PAOK beat Athinaikos 4-3 away from home.

ITALIAN 2nd DIVISION (SERIE B)

Olympian Vince Grella played a full game and received a caution, as Ternana drew 0-0 away to Cosenza.

Olympian Marco Bresciano played a full match and received a caution, as Empoli lost 1-0 away to Torino.

JAPAN EMPERORS CUP - 1st Round

Socceroo Tony Popovic played a full game, while national team-mate Steve Corica scored two goals before being replaced in the 70th minute, as Sanfrecce Hiroshima beat Mita Hollyhock 7-0.

CHILEAN 1ST DIVISION

Marcelo Pena played a full game, as Everton drew 1-1 away to Santiago Wanderers, in the final game of the Chilean First Division.

TRANSFERS - TRIALS - TIDBITS

The rumour mill has Premier league club-side West Ham loaning LG Socceroo Hayden Foxe out to Belgian First Division side Mechelen, while West Ham continues to try and sort out the defender's work permit situation — another Australian defender, Mark Rudan, was recently also on trial at Mechelen.

Interest in Mark Viduka from Italy continues to mount, with Serie-A club side Roma reportedly joining the queue of clubs interested in speaking with the LG Socceroo striker.

FROM THE SIDELINES

Josip Skoko was missing from the Racing Genk line-up this week with an enforced suspension after picking up his third yellow card.

Goalkeeper Kyriakos Tohouroglou was a little unlucky this weekend, despite his team winning away in the Greek first division - Tohouroglou conceded three goals in PAOK's 4-3 victory, two of which were penalties, with the scorer of the third reportedly admitting after the match that he'd used his hand to control the ball.

Olympian Con Blatsis is almost back in action after a lengthy spell on the sidelines through injury, and was to have made his come-back for Derby County in the mid-week reserves fixture against Charlton - unfortunately the game was postponed until February.

Life has proved very unpredictable for Olympic team goalkeeper Danny Milosevic the 22 year old was set to make his debut for the Leeds United first team last weekend when Paul Robinson was in doubt with a knee problem, for the game against Southampton, and Nigel Martyn still side-lined through injury- instead, Robinson played, Milosevic remained on the bench and then damaged ankle ligaments during the week, and is now on crutches.

CONGRATULATIONS go out to - Mike Sajrynes, who celebrates his 21st birthday on December 19, Chris Coyne, who turns 22 on December 20.

TOP AUSSIE GOALSCORERS AROUND THE GLOBE (across all Competitions)

NAME	CLUB	GOALS
AGOSTINO Paul	1860 Munich	16
VIDUKA Mark	Leeds United	13
INVINCIBILE Danny	Swindon Town	8
ALOISI John	Coventry City	6
BRADY Jon	Rushden & Diamonds	6
CORICA Steve	Sanfrecce Hiroshima	6
CAHILL Tim	Millwall	5
MILICIC Ante	Rijeka	5
POPOVIC Tony	Sanfrecce Hiroshima	5
ALLSOPP Danny	Manchester City/Notts County	4
GARCIA Richard	Leyton Orient	4
LOVELL Stuart	Hibernian	4

NSW Premier League

ROUND 7

ST GEORGE STUMBLE TO FIRST HOME LOSS

St George	0
Parramatta	1

By Paul Goodwin

St George stumbled to their first home defeat of the NSW Premier League season when the Parramatta Eagles hung on for a 1-0 win at St George Stadium last Wednesday night in a rescheduled match.

Saints' keeper Stacy Alogdelis was called upon early on to get his fingertips to a clever, inswinging corner from the left by Ben Delicata and push the ball over the bar and Eagles' striker Adam Anderson nodded wide soon after.

Parramatta went ahead in the 27th minute when a free kick, awarded on theedge of the area by referee Nick Asargiotis, was put away by Anthony Mittiga.

Malcolm Meilak tapped the ball gently to his team mate and Mittiga rifled an almost unstoppable shot into the top right corner of a stunned Alogdelis' net.

Anderson was robbed of what seemed a certain scoring chance in the 48th whenAlogdelis left his line smartly to smother the shot after Tom Bazdaric and Anderson broke away to face the keeper.

Big Parramatta defender Meilak came to his team's rescue in the 72nd minute when he cleared off the line after three St George players had attempts on goal, in rapid succession, but without there was not enough power behind any of them.

Jason Holmes had an excellent game in the Parramatta goal, tipping what looked to be a goalbound header from Nick Polimenakos over the bar in the 63rd.

A very boisterous crowd was on hand on a lovely evening to see what was quite a good game overall, but one in which St George failed to break down a stubborn Parramatta defence.

The win, a second in four days for the Eagles, lifts them above St George and into equal second spot with 13 points, just behind Bonnyrigg on goal difference.

Scorers: **St George 0 — Parramatta Eagles 1** *(Mittiga 27)*

ST GEORGE: S Alogdelis, A Leris (N Bolianitis 46), M Kladis, G Zabetakis, M Sevares, A Petratos, B Petrovski (G Maglis 46), C Kalantzis, N Polimenakos, S Verrender (A Markopoulos 65), M Papageorgiou. subs not used; L Alexiou, M Nelson (GK)

PARRAMATTA: J Holmes, D Borg, M Meilak, M Reveley, M O'Shea, M Islas, B Delicata, A Mittiga, N Joseski (T Bazdaric 25), A Anderson, B Conde (S Chipps 80), subs not used; S J Kim, G Jackson, B Xerii (GK).

NSW SUMMER LEAGUE A HUGE SUCCESS

The new NSW Premier League, which kicked-off in November, is a stunning success according to those involved.

The New South Wales Soccer Federation and the ten clubs in the NSW Premier League have been pleased with the outcomes to date.

"There were mixed views about the idea of a summer competition," said Federation President, Peter Gray, 'but to date, we've been very happy with the results.

"Contrary to the view of some before the competition started, crowds have not fallen away and we have not been overshadowed by the NSL in terms of media support.

"We're the global game played at the local level," said Gray.

"Our clubs enjoy good support from the soccer media and local community media."

Peter Gray: NSW Soccer Federation President.

Mr Gray also said that the Premier League's own web site — *www.nswpremier-league.com* — which includes match reports on all matches is very popular.

"The Federation has invested in upgrading our web presence over the past 18 months and it's very worthwhile.

"It not only allows our players, fans and supporters to get information at any time any where on the competition, but it takes the NSW Premier League to a much broader market throughout the State, the country and around the world.

Mr Gray said that the NSW Premier League competition is set to continue as a summer competition in the forseeable future.

The ten clubs in the competition are Belconnen (ACT), Blacktown, Bonnyrigg, Canterbury Marrickville, Central Coast, Leichhardt, Parramatta Eagles, Penrith, St George and Sutherland.

The competition has a two week break over the Christmas period and resumes on 6 January 2001.

• RESULTS •

Re-scheduled Fixtures
Wednesday 20 December

St George	0	Parramatta	1

Saturday 23 December

Bonnyrigg	1	Cant-M'ville	1

• TOP SCORERS •

AFTER ROUND 7

Player	Club	Goals
Steve Lazzari	Belconnen	10
Darren Iocca	Blacktown City	8
Javier Mancino	Bonnyrigg	6
Niko Joseski	Parramatta Eagles	4
Colin Luff	Bonnyrigg	4

NSW PREMIER LEAGUE LADDER

(AFTER ROUND 7)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Blacktown City	7	6	1	0	15	4	**19**
Bonnyrigg	7	4	2	1	20	8	**14**
Parramatta	7	4	1	2	13	13	**13**
Belconnen	7	4	0	3	15	10	**12**
St George	7	3	1	3	11	12	**10**
Central Coast	7	3	0	4	8	8	**9**
Leichhardt	6	2	1	3	10	11	**7**
C'bury M'ville	6	2	1	3	4	8	**7**
Sutherland	7	0	3	4	6	15	**3**
Penrith	7	0	2	5	5	18	**2**

For further information see: www.nswpremierleague.com

NSW Premier League

www.nswpremierleague.com

SATURDAY 6 JANUARY

St George v Central Coast	ST GEORGE STADIUM
Blacktown City v Bonnyrigg	GABBIE STADIUM
Sutherland v C'bury M'ville	SEYMOUR SHAW
Penrith v Parramatta Eagles	ANDREW ROAD FIELD
Under 19s: 5.00pm	*First Grade: 7.00pm*
Belconnen Blue v Leichhardt	WEST BELCONNEN SG
Under 19s: 4.30pm	*First Grade: 6.30pm*

Rescheduled Fixtures

FRIDAY 29 DECEMBER

Cant-M'ville v Leichhardt Tigers	HENSON PARK
Under 19s: 6.00pm	*First Grade: 8.00pm*

"NSW Premier League re-commences on Saturday 6 January 2001"

Catch up with all the latest news on the NSW Premier League and other NSW Soccer news

● 'Soccer Saturday' on *Radio 2SER-FM (107.3)* from 11am-12pm every Saturday

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WORLD

LIPPI WANTS TO STAY IN ITALY

Former Juventus and Inter Milan chief Marcello Lippi has said he is waiting for the chance to coach an Italian team — despite having offers to work abroad.

Lippi has been out of work since October, when he was sacked by Inter after one game of the Serie A season.

Italian soccer regulations mean he cannot coach another Serie A club this season, but Lippi says he is ready to wait until July.

"I intend to remain in Italy even though I am not lacking interesting offers from abroad," Lippi told Italian website calciomercato.com, adding he did not intend to return to coaching until next season.

"Tm not going to make any decision until the end of February or March and then I will evaluate the situation.

"Then, if I don't have any serious offers from Italian clubs, I will give serious consideration to (moving) abroad."

Lippi won three Serie A titles and the 1996 Champions League during his time at Juventus but was unable to turn around the fortunes of Inter.

A defeat to Sweden's Helsingborg in August cost his expensively assembled squad a place in the Champions League and he was dismissed after an opening day league defeat to Reggina.

Lippi has been linked with a number of coaching vacancies in Europe. There has also been speculation about him being on a short-list to replace Lazio coach Sven Goran Eriksson when the Swede leaves the reigning champions to join England in July.

Marcello Lippi: Wants to stay in Italy.

KEANE LOANED OUT TO LEEDS

Leeds United have taken Ireland international Robbie Keane on loan from Inter Milan for the rest of the season.

The English Premier League club also said they had agreed to pay Inter 12 million pounds for Keane at the end of the season if the move is successful.

Leeds chairman Peter Ridsdale said: "We thank Inter Milan for their co-operation in this matter. There was a huge amount of interest in Robbie and it is to their credit that they asked him as to his preference and we are delighted he chose Leeds."

Leeds said they were not prepared to pay a fee for Keane at the moment after spending 18 million pounds on Rio Ferdinand earlier this month.

Risdale added: "As a PLC, we have a duty to our shareholders to ensure that we manage our resources with maximum efficiency.

After the 18 million pounds signing of Rio Ferdinand, we felt it imprudent to spend another12 million immediately — but by structuring a loan formula we have the player we want now without impacting on our financial position."

The forward moved to Inter from Coventry City in a 13 million pounds five-year deal in July.

But he has fallen out of favour since the arrival of Marco Tardelli as coach. West Ham United and Chelsea have had bids for Keane rejected in the last two weeks.

Robbie Keane: Back in England.

MUNICH TO GET NEW STADIUM

A brand new stadium is to be built in Munich for the 2006 World Cup finals in Germany but mayor Christian Ude said the city would not bear the costs.

"The city already has a stadium wich costs 50 million marks ($22.96 million) a year in maintenance," Ude said after a meeting on the stadium project last week.

Ude said it was desirable that local clubs Bayern and TSV 1860 should play in the new stadium and added that they should help finance it.

Bayern president Franz Beckenbauer, who is also the chairman of the organising committee of the 2006 World Cup, called for an agreement between the two clubs before the next meeting on the matter scheduled for February.

"Time is running out," he said. "We must find a solution quickly if we don't want Munich to miss out on the World Cup."

Fears that Munich might not be able to stage 2006 World Cup matches were sparked by the withdrawal earlier this month of a plan to modernise the city's ageing Olympic stadium.

Munich is due to stage the opening game in 2006. An international television centre is also planned in the Bavarian city.

The final will be held in Berlin's Olympic stadium, which is currently undergoing a major facelift.

RONALDO BACK IN ACTION

Ronaldo: Back in action.

Injury-stricken Ronaldo kicked a football in public for the first time in eight months last week and said he was confident of returning to his very best.

The Brazilian went through an hour of light exercises, working with a ball in training for the first time since he tore a tendon in his right knee while playing for Inter Milan in April.

Activity involved mainly dribbling a ball through cones, with a couple of tentative shots and some ball juggling.

"To return to the pitch and train with a ball is a big excitement but I'm not getting carried away," he said.

"I'm working to be like I was before, if not then all this sacrifice will not have been worth anything."

He said he was spurred on by the memory of a goal he scored in a Spanish championship match for Barcelona against Compostela, the one he considers the best of his career.

"That goal is the biggest demonstration of the strength I had and this is why I want to recover," he said

"I never thought about giving up football. I love playing football, it's what I know how to do and I would never think about stopping."

But he did not want to predict when he would be able to play competitively again.

"The most important thing is to be 100 percent," he said.

Ronaldo tore a tendon in his right knee after playing for only six minutes of an Italian Cup final first leg against Lazio.

That was his first game since he partially tore the tendon in an Italian league match the previous November. The second injury was far more serious and led the football world to wonder whether he would ever be the same player — or even play — again.

Since then, Ronaldo has been working desperately to recover the form which led him to be acclaimed the best in the world.

He spent November in the French coastal town of Capbreton, close to the Spanish border, which hosts an exclusive sports clinic and training centre.

Under the eye of a team of physiotherapists and specialist training and medical staff, Ronaldo carried out eight hours of work, six days a week.

Ronaldo's physiotherapist Nilton Petroni said the player was now doing three hours work a day in a gymnasium every morning, following by outdoor training with a ball in the afternoon. He is still not allowed to jump or train in the rain.

Petroni also refused to predict a comeback date and said his recuperation was being planned in one-month stages.

But Ronaldo's spokesman Rodrigo Paiva said: "Since the surgery, the doctor has been saying it will be in the first half of next year."

Ronaldo: The expression on his face says it all.

ERIKSSON'S REPUTATION SUFFERING A BEATING

Sven Goran Eriksson has admitted that his stock is falling as his Italian Serie A champions Lazio lose credibility as a major force.

The man who will become England's coach next summer said: "When you lose too many games then, of course, your reputation as a manager means you're going down the market."

Eriksson was speaking after last weeks 1-0 derby defeat by Roma, a result that left Lazio 10 points adrift of their arch-rivals and Italian league leaders.

This latest setback, (Lazio are already out of the Italian Cup and are one defeat away from a Champions League exit), increased speculation that Eriksson could be joining England before his scheduled July 1 arrival.

He vowed to fight on and finish his job at Lazio, and was endorsed yet again by club owner Sergio Cragnotti, who said: "Sven will stay with us until the end of the season. I will not get tired of saying that."

Eriksson himself was still toeing the party line when asked if he would be relieved should the FA formally request his release from Lazio with immediate effect.

"No I would not be relieved," he said, ìand it's not what I want. The opposite in fact. I don't think anyone wants to finish a job badly. If you know that you're going to change job in six months then you want to finish well in that place.

"To leave a job with a bad result I think is the worst thing in life to do. They will always remember you as a loser."

Certainly the time appears ripe for the FA to step in and bring an end to the farce.

So far everyone has behaved honourably — the FA, for letting Eriksson see out the season with Lazio; the Roman club, for the noble way they have negotiated with the FA and then shown loyalty to their besieged coach; and Eriksson himself, who has insisted that his sole focus must be with Lazio until the end of the season.

But it has become increasingly obvious, as the Italian champions' season disintegrates, that while good intentions are one thing, hard facts are another.

That is why the gentlemanly FA should toughen up and tell Lazio that Eriksson must join them right away - a stance that could save face for all concerned by ending an increasingly embarrassing situation.

Eriksson's honour and professionalism demand he gives everything for Lazio, and he stressed that was exactly what he would do, even if it meant taking no part in the England games next spring: the friendly against Spain in February and the World Cup qualifiers against Finland and Albania in March.

Eriksson said: "The contract we signed does not start until July 1, and we always said maybe about anything else. But the contract we signed begins on July 1, 2001, and that's it.

The feeling among the Lazio fans, however, is that Eriksson's imminent departure has played a major part in the team's form slump. That suggestion clearly touches a nerve, as evidenced when the normally cool Swede snapped:

"It has no effect. We were bad before I took the England job."

Though he tries to simplify it, Eriksson seems to be the only person who believes he can perform at the highest level in one of the most difficult and volatile posts in club football while preparing to take over the Lazio job's international equivalent.

He said: "There can't be any conflict of interest because the FA, Lazio and myself did everything very clearly. I'm the coach of Lazio for the championship and thereafter I manage the England national team."

Yet the powerbrokers at the FA should realise that not only is it unavoidable, a division of loyalties can have calamitous results.

They need only to look at the disastrous experiment at Liverpool, which saw Gerard Houllier and Roy Evans attempt to share the Anfield manager's job, to see that two into one does not go.

Eriksson is on a similar hiding to nothing and seems determined not to concede humiliating defeat in possibly his last club job while realising that the battle between his present and future careers is one he cannot win.

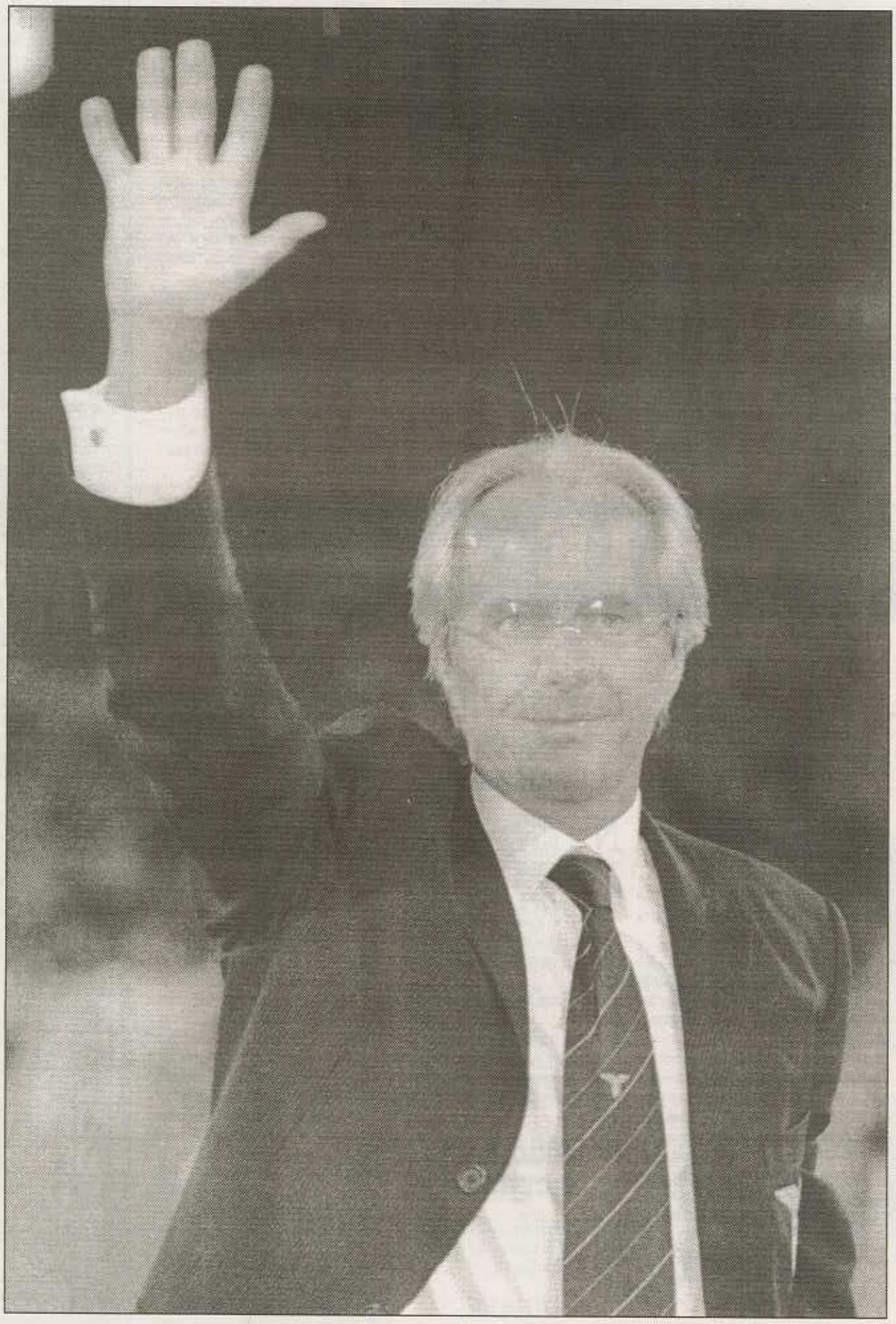
Indeed, he finds himself in the invidious position where resignation runs the risk of being labelled a traitor while staying put could mean holing Lazio's season below the waterline.

The cracks in the team are already showing and the manager is starting to show the strain. He admitted for the first time that the psychological approach has not been correct, though he steered well clear of attributing any blame on the England factor.

He said: "Important players are injured for us, and another reason is that we won the league last season by fighting to the end but, especially at the beginning of this season, we thought things were too easy and mentally we were not prepared."

Neither, it seems, was the coach for what has transpired as a direct consequence. While the FA might feel honour-bound to stick with their earlier position by refusing to make a formal approach for his early release, clearly something has to give in this tug-of-war.

Lazio would undoubtedly complain at such an action publicly, but sources at the club agree privately that it now seems the only viable solution to what has become an experiment gone badly wrong for all parties.



Sven Goran Eriksson: Feeling the heat after a less than brilliant start to Lazio's Serie A and Champions League aspirations.

WORLD

PREMIER LEAGUE

LIVERPOOL 4 ARSENAL 0

Liverpool followed up last weekend's defeat of leaders Manchester United with a thrashing of Arsenal, thanks to a first-half goal by Steven Gerrard and second-half strikes by Michael Owen, Nick Barmby and Robbie Fowler.

CHARLTON 1 EVERTON 0

Matthias Svensson scored with a header from a corner kick in the ninth minute to halt Charlton's slide down the standings as the London side took their first win in five matches.

CHELSEA 3 BRADFORD 0

Chelsea extended their unbeaten home run to seven games with goals by Uruguay's Gustavo Poyet in the 22nd minute, Italian teenager Sam Dalla Bona in the 68th and Iceland's Eidur Gudjohnsen in the dying seconds.

Bradford, bottom of the premier league, have not won at Chelsea since 1912.

MAN. UNITED 2 IPSWICH TOWN 0

Defending champions United extended their lead to eight points with a confident win over Ipswich. Norwegian Ole Gunnar Solskjaer got both goals, in the 20th and 31st minutes, in front of a premier league record crowd of 67,597 at Old Trafford.

Ipswich, beaten 9-0 by United in a premier league record defeat five years ago, improved their marking in the second half but could not ruffle the home side.

DERBY 2 NEWCASTLE 0

Argentine Horacio Carbonari scored his first goal of the season to put Derby ahead in the 33rd minute. The home side sealed their fourth win in six games when Jamaican Deon Burton picked up a free kick to score from close range in the 73rd.

Steven Gerrard: Scored Liverpool's opener.

LEEDS UNITED 1 ASTON VILLA 2

Irishman Robbie Keane, on loan from Inter Milan, made his debut for Leeds as a substitute in the second half and came close to scoring in the 87th minute.

But Leeds, already 1-0 down after a Gareth Southgate header in the 43rd minute, saw George Boateng put the visitors 2-0 up in the 88th before Jonathan Woodgate got a consolation goal in the final minute.

LEICESTER 2 WEST HAM 1

Leicester moved into third in the league with goals from Robbie Savage in the seventh minute and Muzzy Izzet in the 26th.

Frenchman Frederic Kanoute pulled back a goal for West Ham in the 63rd after picking up a long ball on the left and Trevor Sinclair missed a chance to equalise in injury time.

SUNDERLAND 1 MAN CITY 0

Sunderland earned their 50th league win at their Stadium of Light with a 19th-minute goal by Don Hutchison, who drove a free kick straight through the defensive wall. City goalkeeper Nicky

Weaver got one hand to the ball but only helped it into the net.

TOTTENHAM 0 M'BROUGH 0

Tottenham had most of the play and their substitute striker Chris Armstrong had two second-half goals disallowed for offside.

SERIE A

ATALANTA 0 INTER MILAN 1

Dutch international Clarence Seedorf scored in the 63rd minute to give Inter Milan an important away victory at Atalanta.

The loss was Atalanta's first at home this season.

Roma's Francesco Totti gets past Juventus midfielder Edgar Davids.

BRESCIA 2 LECCE 2

Striker Dario Hubner helped nine-man Brescia come from behind and earn a draw at home against Lecce. The visitors had taken an early lead on an 18th minute header by Cristiano Lucarelli.

The Lecce forward repeated himself five minutes into the second half as he struck home a poor clearance by Brescia goalkeeper Pavel Srnicek.

Brescia, began their comeback with veteran Dario Hubner's strike in the 67th minute and were awarded a penalty nine minutes later calmly slotted home by Hubner for the final score.

FIORENTINA 2 VERONA 0

Enrico Chiesa scored his fourth and fifth goals of the season to help Fiorentina win at home against Verona.

A handball in the box by Verona defender Giancarlo Filippini in the 22nd minute paved the way for Chiesa to open the scoring from the penalty spot.

Midway through the second half an unmarked Chiesa scored his second with an easy touch in front of the net on a nice through ball from Rui Costa.

AC MILAN 1 PERUGIA 2

Zissis Vryzsas'goal in the 58th minute was the difference as Perugia beat AC Milan at the San Siro Stadium for the first time in club history. Perugia opened the scoring in the 21st minute as ex-Milan forward Luca Saudati slotted home a header from close range.

Andriy Shevchenko equalised with his league leading 11th goal of the season three minutes later.

NAPOLI 2 PARMA 2

Nicola Amoruso's goal six minutes from time helped Napoli salvage a draw against Parma. Parma had taken the lead through a Johan Micoud header in the 41st minute.

Napoli's Fabio Pecchiam then equalised on a beautifully taken free-kick two minutes into the second half.

Fresh from his return from injury, Yugoslav international Savo Milosevic headed home a cross in the 77th minute to give Parma the lead before Amoruso fired home a close range shot in the 84th minute for the final result.

REGGINA 1 VICENZA 0

Ezio Brevi's first goal in Serie A in the 72nd minute was enough as Reggina beat Vicenza.

UDINESE 3 BOLOGNA 1

Danish international Martin Jorgensen scored twice to help Udinese get a win at home over Bologna.

Jorgensen opened the scoring after four minutes with a strike from just outside the box.

He made it two in the 33rd minute with a well-taken header Striker Giuseppe Signori pulled one back for Bologna in the 79th minute, immediately making amends for an earlier penalty miss.

Udinese's Stefano Fiore scored from the spot in the 85th minute after Giuliano Giannichedda was brought down in the box.

BARI 1 LAZIO 2

After losing to rivals AS Roma in last weekend's derby, Lazio rebounded with an away victory at Bari. Yugoslav international Sinisa Mihajlovic opened the scoring for Lazio with a well taken corner deflected into the back of his own net by Bari forward Yksel Osmanovski.

Substitute Fabrizio Ravanelli came on in the second half and headed home a cross by Pavel Nedved to double Lazio's lead in the 64th minute. Bari midfielder Daniel Andersson slotted home a penalty six minutes from time for the final result.

AS ROMA 0 JUVENTUS 0

League leaders AS Roma were held to a goalless draw at home by second place Juventus in front of 73,000 at the Olympic Stadium. An entertaining match saw both sides attack throughout in an attempt to break the deadlock.

RUSSO WRITES

By Joe Russo

The recent FIFA awards in Rome were certainly controversial because of the awarding jointly, to Pelé and Diego Maradona, the title 'Player of the Century'.

From an Italian football perspective, Maradona is definitely the greatest ever player to grace a Serie A field. There is absolutely no doubt about it!

About this time two years ago in Naples, I asked a tourist coach driver, "does this city still love Maradona"? He looked at me mesmerised, as if to say how could you ask such a dumb question, and then simply answered "certo".

From the day the Napoli club signed him in 1984 from Barcelona, he has been loved in Naples — and, even if some don't like to admit it, the rest of Italy adored him.

You can't develop talent like that — he was a true natural magician on the field, even though he was a real problem child off it. Maradona reigned supreme in Italy from 1984 until 1991. Napoli as a club never performed as good again once he had gone.

Maradona was an incredible figure in Naples. Regularly, at the start of each season, he would extend his holidays in Argentina and say he was refusing to return to Italy. He would miss the first few Serie A rounds and the then Club President, Corrado Ferlaino, would say we have sacked him this time.

However, Maradona would return (late as usual), the fans would forgive him and Ferlaino would accept it as a normal part of business in dealing with Maradona. On the field Napoli were very strong and Maradona, as usual, was the star. They have only ever won two Italian League titles, in 1987 and in 1990, and guess who was their captain?

FIFA should ask a Neapolitan who is the Player of the Century! Recently, as a tribute to Maradona, the club decided to permanently retire his number 10 shirt in a similar way to what AC Milan did with Franco Baresi's number 6 shirt.

Since Maradona left Italy in 1991 he had never returned until three years ago. His personal problems with the Italian legal authorities made sure of that.

However, all seems to be forgiven and he has made several appearances in Italy now but is yet to appear in the city of Naples.

The first time he returned to Italy (Rome to be precise) was as guest of a popular variety show on Italian television. For the occasion they re-united the 1987 Napoli team that won the Scudetto, to celebrate a 10-year reunion, and naturally the reunion couldn't be complete without Maradona.

He duly appeared, juggled a soccer ball and said hello to the thousands of Neapolitans who had braved the cold and were watching it all on a giant screen in the main square, Piazza Plebiscito, of Naples.

It is also worth remembering that the first time he turned up to training at the San Paolo Stadium in Naples in 1984, almost 80,000 people turned up as well. Incredible when you think about it!

Today his name is still linked with the club even though it may all be a fantasy of some journalists. There are reports that Napoli would like him as coach and others that have his name linked to the presidency of the club.

No matter what truth lies behind these reports, there can be no doubt that the Napoli club would like him back in any capacity.

The fans — would they like him back? If in doubt see the bus driver's answer. His name is linked to the success of the club and the memories are still very vivid for all.

FIFA may have awarded a joint prize, but in Italian football there is no room for a joint prize. Maradona was the greatest ever in the Serie A and it is unlikely that we will ever see another like him. It is hard to imagine that one single player could ever have so much influence over a club, and therefore a league, as Maradona did.

Juventus fans will mention Michel Platini and AC Milan fans may even mention Marco Van Basten or Ruud Gullit, but without taking anything away from great players like these, they were no Maradona.

Furthermore, the Juventus team of Platini's era and the AC Milan team of Gullit and Van Basten's era, were truly great teams. Napoli was never a great team; it had one great player who was an inspiration to all who played with him. Diego Maradona is Serie A's 'Player of the Century'.

Best Wishes to all ABSW readers for the Festive Season.

WORLD

FIGO VOTED EUROPE'S BEST

PREVIOUS WINNERS

1956	Sir Stanley Matthews	1979	Kevin Keegan
1957	Alfredo Di Stefano	1980	Karl-Heinz Rummenigge
1958	Raymond Kopa	1981	Karl-Heinz Rummenigge
1959	Alfredo Di Stefano	1982	Paolo Rossi
1960	Luis Suarez	1983	Michel Platini
1961	Omar Sivori	1984	Michel Platini
1962	Josef Masopust	1985	Michel Platini
1963	Lev Yashin	1986	Igor Belanov
1964	Denis Law	1987	Ruud Gullit
1965	Eusebio	1988	Marco van Basten
1966	Bobby Charlton	1989	Marco van Basten
1967	Florian Albert	1990	Lothar Matthaeus
1968	George Best	1991	Jean-Pierre Papin
1969	Gianni Rivera	1992	Marco van Basten
1970	Gerd Mueller	1993	Roberto Baggio
1971	Johan Cruyff	1994	Hristo Stoichkov
1972	Franz Beckenbauer	1995	George Weah
1973	Johan Cruyff	1996	Matthias Sammer
1974	Johan Cruyff	1997	Ronaldo
1975	Oleg Blochin	1998	Zinedine Zidane
1976	Franz Beckenbauer	1999	Rivaldo
1977	Allan Simonsen	2000	Luis Figo
1978	Kevin Keegan		

Portuguese midfielder Luis Figo, the world's most expensive player, was named European Footballer of the Year last week.

Figo, who moved from Barcelona to Real Madrid for a world record transfer in July after Portugal were knocked out in the Euro 2000 semifinals, was awarded the "Golden Ball" in a poll of soccer journalists organised by French weekly France Football.

"I don't consider myself to be the best or the worst. All I know is that this award is a recognition of a job well done over the past year," the Portuguese international told reporters.

"I would like to dedicate this prize to my wife and daughter who have always been at my side."

"I would also like to dedicate it to my team mates at Barcelona, in the Portuguese national side and at Madrid, and to the fans of Portugal and Real as well as to all the Portuguese people who have supported me over the years."

Juventus midfielder Zinedine Zidane, who won the award in 1998 and was named World Footballer of the Year earlier this month ahead of Figo, finished second with AC Milan's Ukrainian striker Andriy Shevchenko third.

Another Frenchman, Arsenal striker Thierry Henry, was fourth.

Figo received 197 points and Zidane 181. Shevchenko, top scorer last season in Serie A, was a distant third on 85 points.

Last year's Golden Ball winner, Barcelona's Brazilian forward Rivaldo, was fifth on 39 points, level with Italy's Alessandro Nesta.

Figo was also named "player of the year" by influential magazine World Soccer.

Luis Figo: The best player in Europe.

I AM NO SAINT:

Di CANIO

Paolo Di Canio: Celebrates after scoring a goal.

West Ham striker Paolo di Canio is not expecting any praise for his act of sportsmanship in last weeks Premier League clash with Everton.

The 32-year-old Italian was well-placed to score a late winner when he caught the ball to stop the game and allow Everton goalkeeper Paul Gerrard to receive attention to a knee injury. The match finished 1-1.

"I am not a saint, just like I wasn't a killer two years ago with the referee when I did something wrong," he told the Sun newspaper.

Di Canio was banned for 11 games in September 1998 after he pushed referee Paul Alcock to the ground while playing for his former club Sheffield Wednesday against Arsenal.

"I saw the goalkeeper was on the ground and in pain. During the game, the opposition is my enemy. But when they are injured, they are my colleagues and I must help them.

"Only stupid people would say I was wrong and that we could be in sixth place if it wasn't for me."

West Ham skipper Steve Lomas admitted to being puzzled at first by Di Canio's act. "I did go up to him at the time and ask what he thought he was doing. But until you are in that situation you do not know how you will react," he said.

"It has to be a unique moment of sportsmanship and he did the game a great service."

Gerrard was not badly hurt, suffering only a twisted knee.

Paolo Di Canio: Showed us all an ugly side as seen here when he pushed a referee in 1998.

INTO ENEMY TERRITORY

George Graham's move from Arsenal to bitter North London rivals Tottenham raised an eyebrow or two at White Hart Lane, however midway through this season, Graham has moulded a youthful and mainly British based team that is challenging for a European berth.

Many thought that George Graham would ruffle rather than preen the feathers of Tottenham's famous cockerel. The pragmatist would squeeze the romance out of the old bird until it squawked in protest.

Yet Graham shares the same, as yet unfulfilled, ambition as legendary manager Bill Nicholson.

His accomplishments have haunted every occupant of the Tottenham hot-seat.

Yet even during those days when Tottenham were the most prolific of spenders, even known as the Bank of England club, Nicholson had a dream.

It was, simply put, of a Tottenham team of largely home-grown players. Of a day when the knee-jerk reaction to any problem was not to reach for the cheque book. Economics dictate, especially, some might suggest, with Alan Sugar as chairman but Graham is adamant.

"It's the route I want to go down," he insists. "I've always been an advocate of youth. Look at what I did at Arsenal."

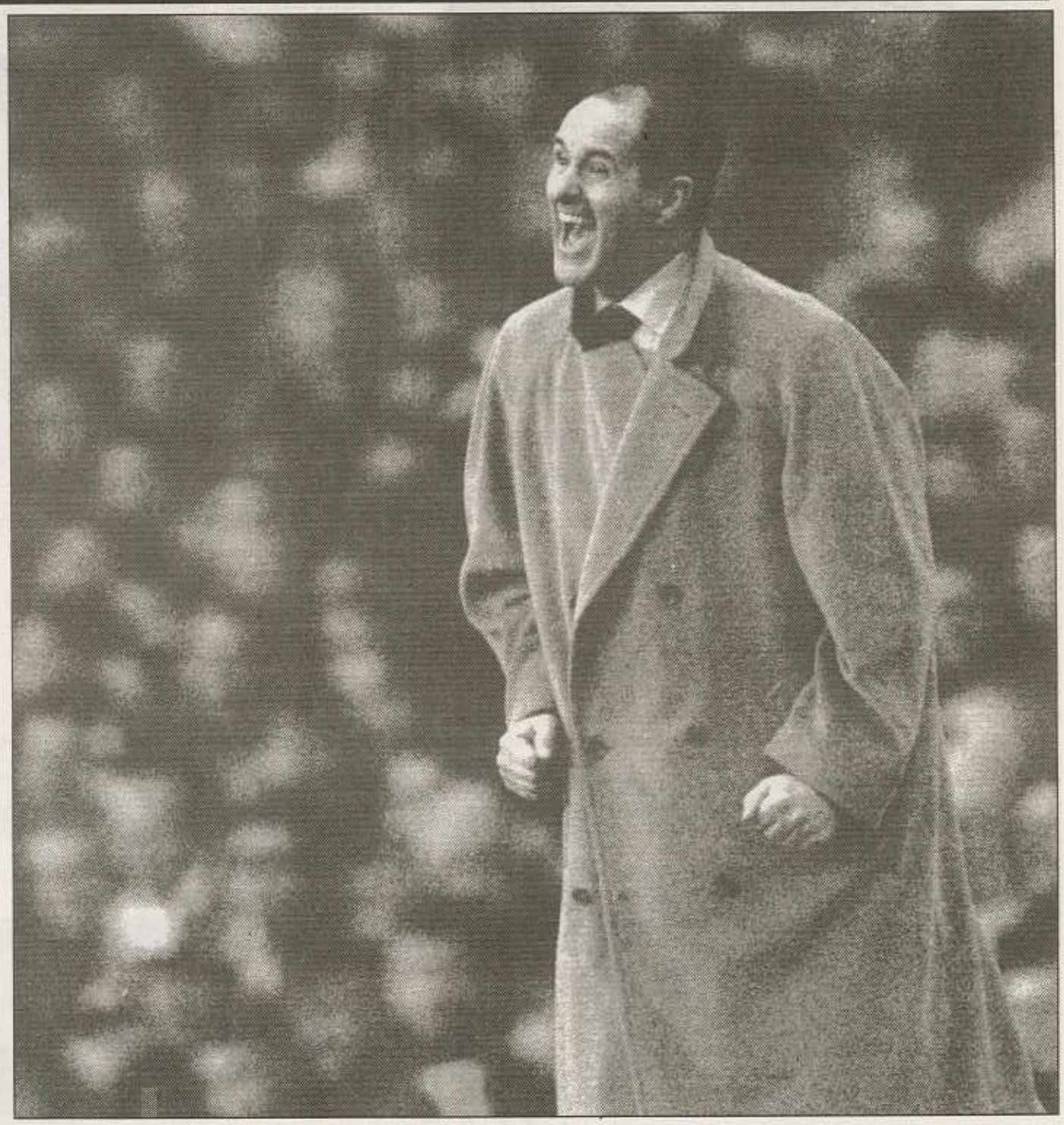
Highbury is not perhaps the most diplomatic points of reference. Among fans, the north London border separating Tottenham and Arsenal is deeply drawn, etched with at best animosity and at worst pure hatred.

Maybe though, Graham, whose crossing of that border remains criminal in some eyes, has found much-needed comfort in that philosophy. A few weeks ago there was talk of demonstrations, by supporters who had yet to see their side lose at White Hart Lane this season.

Victory over Liverpool naturally helped silence the critics. But it was also the sight of two 20-year-olds, Ledley King and Alton Thelwell, in the starting line-up.

"That match certainly gave me my most heart-warming moment of the season," admits Graham. "They handled the occasion so well. I think the crowd appreciated that they were cheering their own.

"Now the fans seem to have settled down. They have been very good. They have stuck with us. The majority can see what I am trying to do. Our supporters are no different from those at other clubs. There's a hard-core that want success today, not tomorrow.



George Graham: Earning the respect of Tottenham fans who were sceptical after his move from Arsenal.

George Graham: Looking into the future at Spurs with Youth to play a major role.

"I know some were saying I'd lost my cheque book. But that's the easy, and not always the best or most successful way out. A lot of work is going on at the training ground. Perhaps the sight of those youngsters made them realise it.

"We went up to Old Trafford earlier this season and fielded five players who had come through the ranks. In fact we started with all 11 players from Britain or Ireland. That's quite something these days. The kids were a bit overawed at first but soon settled. We put on a good show. No-one expected us to win against United but the performance was pleasing.

"Just look at Manchester United and Leeds United with the kids they have brought through. That's my aim — to produce a similar and, hopefully, successful policy. It takes time. Of course it does. And time is always the enemy."

Graham concedes that Leeds' £18 million purchase of Rio Ferdinand amazed him.

"The word going the rounds in football is not to spend big because of the uncertainty over the transfer system," explains Graham. "I don't know what is right. We just have to listen to the experts. Until we hear something positive about how the transfer system will operate we are not doing anything dramatic."

There is little doubt that Graham expects to lose England defender Sol Campbell, who becomes a free agent when his contract expires at the end of the season.

"I respect his view," says Graham. "But the fact that he will not sit down and see what terms we would offer speaks volumes. Darren Anderton's contract is also up but we will talk to him next summer.

"I am delighted Steve Carr has signed an extension to his contract. He is one of the most improved players at the club — and he will get better."

Graham is convinced that for this season at least the championship is between Manchester United and Arsenal.

"They both have great depth and strength," stresses Graham. "I know Arsenal have gone through a dodgy spell but they have quality players. It is not a particularly good thing to say it's a two-horse race at this stage of the season but that seems to be the case. But for their involvement in Europe, which I think has held them back, Leeds might also be challenging."

Yet Graham is still convinced that a top six place is within Tottenham's reach.

"There is no reason why not, especially if we have everyone fit. We're only a few points behind that mark now. If you put a run together you're right up there. I'm delighted with our home form but we must improve away.

"How long will it take to get Tottenham up among the top clubs? I would say it's got to be two years or more. A few big clubs, like Newcastle, Everton and Aston Villa are in the same boat. We're re-building.

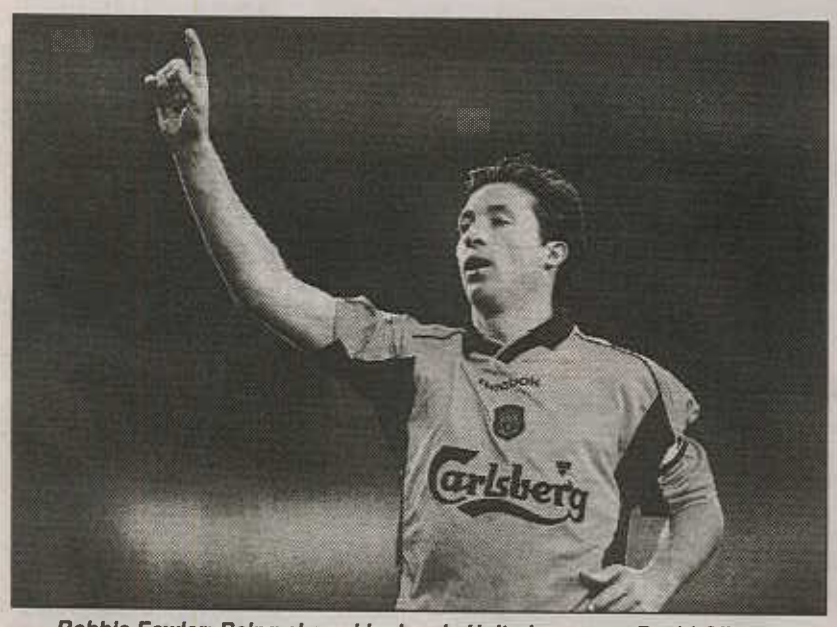
"Some of the new players are still settling in, like Sergei Rebrov, who is astonished at the pace and physical intensity of the Premiership. I'm also urging Ben Thatcher to express himself more. They are quality players and quality will always show in the end."

If there is one thing that continual bugs Graham, now "nearly 100 per cent" fit after a bout of acute arthritis, it is the tag that he produces boring and defensive sides.

"It's a myth," declares Graham. "People that say I'm defensive don't know me. I would hold my hands up if we were winning games 1-0. Speak to the players. Does Steve Carr look a defensive full-back? I want them to go forward. I want them to attack."

The cockerel would have crowed his approval.

LEEDS CHASE FOWLER



Robbie Fowler: Being chased by Leeds United manager David O'Leary.

Leeds boss David O'Leary is prepared to make a second offer for troubled Liverpool striker Robbie Fowler.

O'Leary, who had a £10million bid for Fowler rejected last season, is ready to offer a similar sum for the 25-year-old after losing Michael Bridges for the rest of the campaign with an ankle injury.

Only recently, Houllier suggested that he might be about to off-load his injury-prone hitman.

"All players have their price," he said. "Robbie is not on the transfer list, but we look at all our players and assess things when it suits us.

"That time may be at the end of the season, or during the season."

Fowler made just eight starts last season, and registered just three goals, while this time around he has seen Heskey cement his position as Houllier's favoured front-man.

There may be a stumbling block in the valuation of the deal, though as Houllier believes Fowler is worth more in the region of £15m.

Fowler, who has been at Anfield for eight years, has scored just five times this season, but his overall record of 110 goals in 218 league games would be enough to convince plenty of potential suitors of his value.

MALDINI TEMPTED BY MOVE TO CHELSEA

AC Milan defender Paulo Maldini has revealed he would like to become a member of Claudio Ranieri's cosmopolitan collective at Chelsea.

The 32-year-old Italian international captain has been one of the world's most respected footballers over the past decade but is now entering the autumn of an illustrious career.

And although Maldini has previously vowed to end his playing days with the San Siro giants, he admitted he is becoming increasingly tempted by the prospect of joining Stamford Bridgeís Italian contingent.

"Somewhere like Chelsea appeals to me as I have good friends there like Gianfranco Zola and Marcel Desailly," said Maldini.

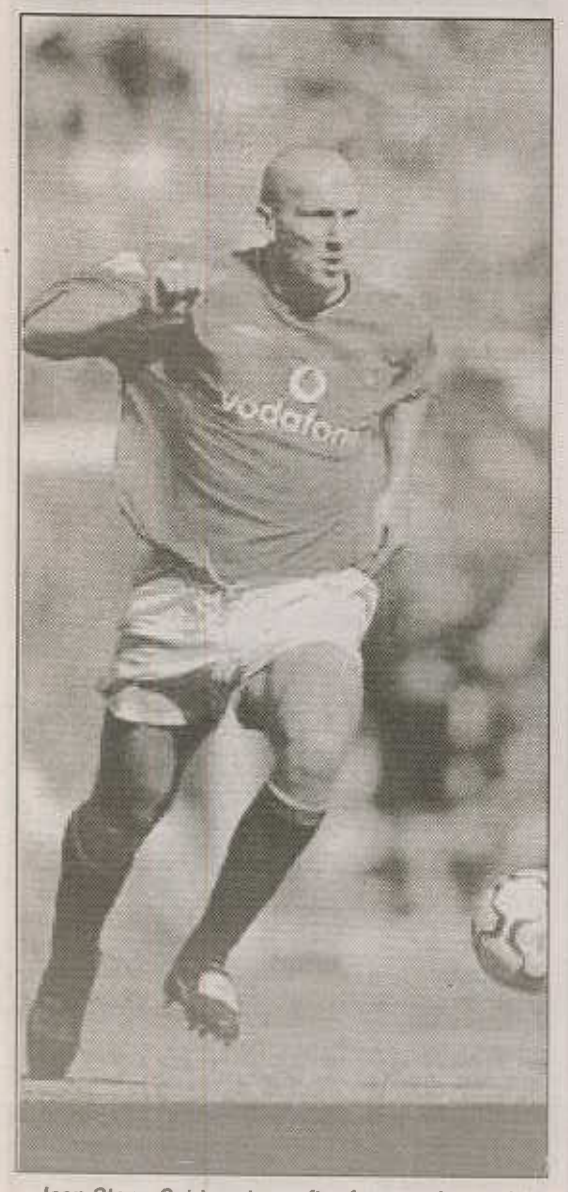
"I love London and Chelsea would be one of my choices if I had the chance."

But Maldini also admitted he would be interested in moving to Old Trafford if the west London club were not interested in his talents.

Paulo Maldini: Tempted to join a huge Italian contingent at Chelsea.

"I would also consider Manchester United because they are the biggest club in the world," he added.

However Ranieri has made it clear that one of his major concerns is the average age of the Chelsea squad, thus Maldini's ambition to play at Stamford Bridge may not be realised.



Jaap Stam: Set to return after four weeks on the sidelines.

STAM AND COLE TO RETURN IN NEW YEAR

Manchester United defender Jaap Stam will return to action during the first week of the new year after missing four months with an Achilles injury.

The Dutch international underwent surgery to cure a long-standing problem caused by wear and tear.

"I will probably slot him into a reserve match at the end of the first week in January and see how it goes from there," manager Alex Ferguson told the Manchester Evening News.

"It will be nice to have him back. He really has a commanding presence out on the park."

Ferguson said England striker Andy Cole would also play within two weeks after a similar Achilles operation.

"Like with Jaap, it's a question of finding a suitable game to get Andy back into action," he said.

"We will have a look at him at the start of January and take it from there."

Andy Cole: United have struggled up front with him missing.

WORLD

HIDDINK HEADING TO KOREA

Dutchman Guus Hiddink will coach South Korea's national team in a bid to reach the round of 16 in the 2002 World Cup, which is being co-hosted by Korea and Japan.

Hiddink, a former coach of Spain's Real Madrid and the Dutch national team, will begin his new job on January 1 and lead the Korean team until the end of the World Cup on June 30, 2002, the Korea Football Association (KFA) said at a news conference.

The contract terms say Hiddink can choose his own assistant coach and physical trainer.

The KFA did not disclose details of the contract, except to say Hiddink would be given incentive bonuses if the Koreans get to the round 16 in 2002.

Three million tickets for the biggest event in sport go on sale on February 15, 2001. Some 740,000 are to be sold to the public in South Korea, which will host half the matches of 2002's final, including the opening ceremony.

Ticket prices range from about $50 for a third-class seat at preliminary matches to $750 for a first-class seat at the final, to be held in Japan, organising committees have announced.

Hiddink said he took the job because the KFA impressed him as "very serious and professional in attitude" and because "it's a big honour to play with a host nation in a world championship."

The 54-year-old Hiddink, who began playing for the De Graafschap Club of the Netherlands in 1967, led Real Madrid from 1998 to 1999 and the Netherlands national team from 1995 to 1998.

He also played for PSV Eindhoven and for the Washington Diplomats and San Jose Earthquakes in the old North American Soccer League.

This season he has been coaching Spain's Real Betis Sevilla team.

Hiddink replaces Huh Jung-moo, who local media reported voluntarily quit to take responsibility for Korea's poor performance in recent international tournaments and the 2000 Sydney Olympic games. South Korea won only one preliminary match in Sydney.

Hiddink led the Netherlands' national team to the semifinals of the 1998 World Cup in France, beating South Korea 5-0 along the way.

He said that match showed him the weakness of the Korean team. "Korea has physical and mental strengths, but I would work to emphasise the tactical way of playing," he said.

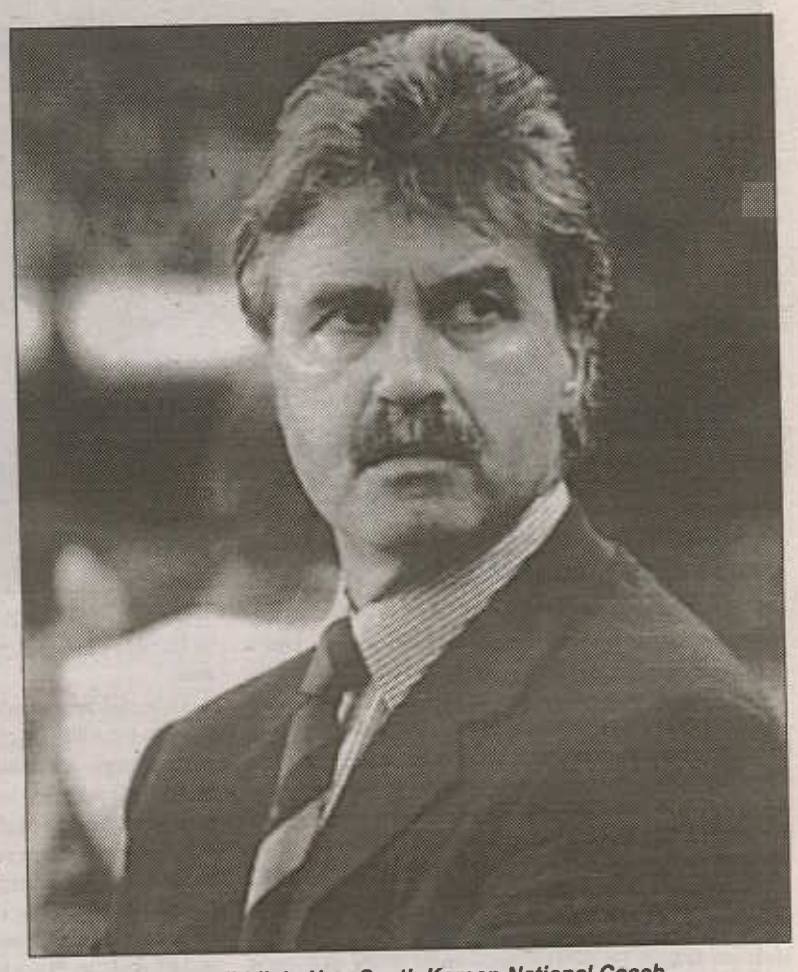
"Nowadays, you have to be like a good machine. A team must have good individual play and also have great technical skill in a disciplined way. If not, you're out of the game.

"I think one of the main differences in the game against Korea (in the last World Cup) was we could keep very good technical discipline on our team.

"In general, it is very important to make a team, which is in control in games, with the capability of changing tactics during games," said Hiddink, who will live in a Seoul hotel for the duration of his contract.

South Korea want to do at least as well as co-hosts Japan in the Cup, a major motivation behind hiring Hiddink, who expressed confidence that his new team matched up well with Korea's main soccer rival.

South Korea have advanced to every World Cup tournament since 1986.



Guus Hiddink: New South Korean National Coach.

ANDERLECHT AND BRUGES LEVEL HEADING INTO BREAK

Champions Anderlecht came from two goals down to beat Sint-Truiden 3-2 at home and go into the Belgian winter break level on points with Club Bruges at the top.

Anderlecht and Bruges have 48 points but Bruges boast the better goal difference and a game in hand.

The Brussels side, bidding farewell to skipper Lorenzo Staelens who is set to end his career in Japan, lamely surrendered two goals within the opening half hour.

But they stormed back after the break with three goals in 15 minutes from Canadian Tomasz Radzinski, Alin Stoica and Bart Goor.

The visitors were reduced to 10 men when defender Peter Voets was sent off midway through the second half.

Standard Liege beat bottom club Harelbeke 3-0 to stay third, but are 14 points adrift of the leaders.

Charleroi charged into fourth, thrashing nine-man Beveren 5-0 to remain unbeaten under new coach Enzo Scifo.

BELGIAN FIRST DIVISION

Charleroi 5 Beveren 0, Lokeren 3 La Louviere 1, Germinal Beerschot 4 Excelsior Mouscron 1, Genk 3 Mechelen 1, Lierse 2 Eendracht Aalst 0, Anderlecht 3 Sint-Truiden 2, Antwerp 1 Westerlo 3, Standard Liege 3 Harelbeke 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Club Bruges	17	16	0	1	55	10	48
2. Anderlecht	18	15	3	0	53	15	48
3. Standard Liege	18	10	4	4	45	23	34
4. Charleroi	18	10	2	6	35	32	32
5. Ghent	17	9	4	4	36	26	31
6. Westerlo	18	9	4	5	33	27	31
7. Excelsior Mouscron	18	9	3	6	38	25	30
8. Lierse	18	8	4	6	29	24	28
9. Lokeren	18	7	6	5	27	26	27
10. Germinal Beerschot	18	8	1	9	31	29	25
11. Beveren	18	6	5	7	18	36	23
12. Antwerp	18	7	1	10	23	27	22
13. Genk	18	5	6	7	21	23	21
14. Sint-Truiden	18	3	4	11	19	34	13
15. Eendracht Aalst	18	3	4	11	17	43	13
16. Mechelen	18	2	4	12	22	41	10
17. La Louviere	18	1	6	11	13	34	9
18. Harelbeke	18	2	1	15	21	60	7

ROMARIO HAT-TRICK SPELLS MERCOSUR FOR VASCO

Veteran striker Romario scored a hat trick, including two penalties, as Vasco da Gama came from three goals behind to beat Palmeiras 4-3 away in an astonishing Copa Mercosur final.

Romario completed Vasco's amazing second half recovery when he tapped in a rebound at the far post in the third minute of injury time for the winner. Palmeiras players collapsed on the field in disbelief and the crowd of 20,000 fell eerily silent.

Palmeiras had led 3-0 at halftime in the all-Brazilian final after Francisco Arce, Magrao and Tuta scored in the last 10 minutes of the first half.

Romario: Hat-Trick.

Former Atletico Madrid and Middlesbrough player Juninho Paulista was involved in all four goals as Vasco hit back after the break.

Juninho won the penalties from which Romario scored Vasco's first two goals. He scored the third himself and then produced the shot which led to Romario's final goal.

Romario, still one of the world's top players at the age of 34, took his personal tally in all competitions this year to a club record 64.

The match was the third of the final after Vasco won the first game and Palmeiras the second. The competition features 20 of South America's biggest clubs, who are hand-picked by the South American Football Confederation (CSF).

Palmeiras have been in all three Mercosur finals. They beat Cruzeiro in 1998 and lost to Flamengo last year.

ARGENTINA DOWN MEXICO THANKS TO DEBUTANTS

Santiago Solari and Luciano Galletti scored their first international goals to lead Argentina to a 2-0 victory over Mexico in a friendly at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum last week.

Solari, who plays for Spain's Real Madrid, gave Argentina the only goal it needed in the 14th minute.

Marcelo Delgado slipped a ball from the right corner to Lucas Castroman, who eluded Mexico's Jose Manuel Abundis and sent a cross to Solari.

Solari stepped in front of Francisco Palencia and headed a 6-metre shot past Mexico goalkeeper Jorge Campos.

The 20-year-old Galletti completed the scoring in the 82nd minute when he ran 60 metres down the right wing, moved into the penalty area unmarked, and struck a 9-metre shot inside the left post.

Argentina celebrate.

Galletti was one of seven Argentine players — four of them starters — taking part in their first international match.

Lazio midfielder Diego Simeone played in his 98th international match for Argentina to break a national record he had shared with Oscar Ruggeri.

NANTES HIT THE TOP AFTER SEDAN GOES DOWN 2-0

Nantes displaced Sedan at the top of the French first division last week when they won in Bordeaux for the first time for 18 years.

Their marksmen in a 2-0 win were Romanian Viorel Moldovan, who struck his ninth league goal of the season, and Eric Carriere.

Sedan lost 2-0 in Brittany to in-form Stade Rennes who have taken 13 points from their last five outings.

The match between Strasbourg and Metz was abandoned in the the 66th minute after lineswoman Nelly Vienot was hit by a missile thrown from the stands.

She was carried from the touchline clutching the side of her head.

In Lille, Bastia players and officials were involved in a scuffle with stewards who were checking their passes in the Lille stadium before the clubs' first division match.

Bastia president Francois Nicolai said he would lodge a complaint with the French League against Lille for alleged assault.

FRENCH CHAMPIONNAT

Bordeaux 0 Nantes 2, Lyon 2 St Etienne 1, Auxerre 3 Lens 2, Lille 1 Bastia 0, Stade Rennes 2 Sedan 0, PSG 0 Troyes 0, Toulouse 1 En Avant Guingamp 1, Strasbourg v Metz (abandoned), Marseille 2 Monaco 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Nantes	22	12	3	7	38	28	39
2. Lille	22	10	7	5	22	15	37
3. Sedan	22	10	6	6	31	23	36
4. Girondins Bordeaux	22	9	8	5	29	20	35
5. Olympique Lyon	22	8	10	4	29	19	34
6. En Avant Guingamp	22	9	6	7	25	25	33
7. Stade Rennes	22	9	5	8	24	20	32
8. Bastia	22	9	5	8	25	22	32
9. RC Lens	22	8	7	7	27	24	31
10. Troyes	22	8	7	7	25	28	31
11. Paris St Germain	22	8	6	8	31	31	30
12. AJ Auxerre	22	8	5	9	24	28	29
13. St Etienne	22	7	6	9	30	31	27
14. Olympique Marseille	22	8	3	11	23	27	27
15. Monaco	22	7	5	10	30	32	26
16. Metz	21	5	7	9	16	25	22
17. Toulouse	22	4	7	11	21	30	19
18. Strasbourg	21	4	5	12	16	40	17

(note: Strasbourg v Metz abandoned)

WORLD

FIFA World Rankings

(Valid until January 17)

1	Brazil	69	Burkina Faso	137	Swaziland
2	France	69	Congo DR	138	Bahrain
3	Argentina	71	Uzbekistan	138	Luxemburg
4=	Italy	72=	Albania	140	Tanzania
4=	Czech Republic	72=	**AUSTRALIA**	141	Fiji
6	Portugal	74=	Kuwait	142	Korea DPR
7	Spain	74=	China PR	143=	Grenada
8	Netherlands	76	FYR Macedonia	143=	Antigua and Barbuda
9=	Yugoslavia	77	Cuba	145=	Andorra
9=	Paraguay	78	Bosnia-Herz	145=	St Kitts & Nevis
11	Germany	79=	Iraq	147	Liechtenstein
12	Mexico	79=	Guinea	148	Benin
13	Romania	81	Togo	149	Sri Lanka
14	Norway	82	Algeria	150	Botswana
15	Colombia	83=	El Salvador	151	Bangladesh
16	United States	83=	Haiti	152	Dominica
17	England	85	Lithuania	153	Bermuda
18	Croatia	86	Congo	154	Maldives
19	Chile	87	Namibia	154	Gambia
20	South Africa	88	Senegal	156	Cape Verde Is
21	Russia	89	Gabon	157	Dominican Rep
22	Denmark	90=	Armenia	158	Eritrea
22	Sweden	90=	New Zealand	159	Cayman Islands
24	Slovakia	92	Latvia	160	Yemen
25	Scotland	93	Northern Ireland	161	Mauritania
26	Tunisia	94	Moldova	162	Chinese Taipei
27	Belgium	95=	Liberia	163	Chad
28	Morocco	95=	Belarus	164	Surinam
29	Trinidad & Tobago	97	Indonesia	165	Laos
30	Turkey	98	Mali	166	Nepal
31	Ireland Rep	99	Vietnam SR	167	Vanuatu
32	Uruguay	100	Syria	168	San Marino
33	Egypt	101	Singapore	169	Cambodia
34	Ukraine	102=	Qatar	170	Cook Islands
35	Slovenia	102=	Uganda	171	Palestine
36	Saudi Arabia	104	Barbados	172	British Virgin Is.
36	Iran	105	Jordan	173	Samoa
38	Japan	106	Oman	174	Kyrgyzstan
39	Cameroon	107=	Malaysia	175	Netherlands Ant
40	Korea Republic	107=	Kenya	176	Central African R.
41	Israel	109	Wales	177	Guinea-Bissau
42	Greece	110	Lebanon	178	Bahamas
43	Poland	111	Venezuela	179	Philippines
44	Austria	112	Mozambique	179	Macao
45	Peru	113	Malawi	181	Sao Tome e Principe
46	Honduras	114	Madagascar	182	Niger
47	Hungary	115	Azerbaijan	183	Guyana
48=	Jamaica	116	Libya	184	Aruba
48=	Zambia	117	Faroe Islands	185	Tonga
50	Iceland	118	Mauritius	186	Belize
51	Cote d' Ivoire	119	Malta	187	Equatorial Guinea
52	Nigeria	120	Kazakhstan	188	Seychelles
53=	Bulgaria	121	Panama	189	Djibouti
53=	Ecuador	122	India	190	Pakistan
55	Angola	123	Hong Kong	191	Nicaragua
56	Guatemala	124	Myanmar	192	Papua New Guinea
57=	Ghana	125	Turkmenistan	193	Brunei Dar
57=	Switzerland	126	Burundi	194	Somalia
59	Finland	127	St Vincent/Gr	195	Puerto Rico
60	Costa Rica	128	Rwanda	196=	Mongolia
61	Thailand	129	Sierra Leone	196=	Anguilla
62	Cyprus	130	Solomon Islands	198	US Virgin Islands
63	Canada	131	Tahiti	199	Guam
64	UAE	132	Sudan	200	Turks & Caicos Isl
65	Bolivia	133	Ethiopia	201	Bhutan
66	Georgia	134	Tajikistan	202	Montserrat
67	Estonia	135	St Lucia		
68	Zimbabwe	136	Lesotho		

***Note:** Teams inactive since 1991 and teams which have not played yet to do not appear in the table.*

2002 CO-HOSTS IN STALEMATE

South Korean forward Ahn Jung-Hwan steals the ball from Japan's Shunsuke Nakamura.

Japan could only draw 1-1 with 10-man South Korea last week in a friendly between the Asian archrivals and 2002 World Cup co-hosts.

South Korea opened the scoring in the 14th minute, when Ahn Jung-hwan of Italian Serie A club Perugia exploited some loose marking to break through Japan's defence and fire home.

Japan could have equalised five minutes later from the penalty spot, but veteran goalkeeper Kim Byung-ji deflected the shot from striker Atsushi Yanagisawa.

However, with midfielder Kim Sang-sik being sent off in the 26th minute, the Koreans spent most of the remainder of the match on the defensive.

Defender Toshihiro Hattori bagged the equaliser, his first international goal, when he nodded Yanagisawa's cross over Kim Byung-ji in the 56th minute.

Japan dominated the rest of the second half but the Koreans, with new national coach Guus Hiddink watching from the stands, put on a tough performance at the back.

The draw was a disappointment for a crowd of over 54,000 that had gathered at Tokyo's National Stadium to watch Japan prove themselves as Asian champions.

VALNCIA STAY TOP DESPITE CAREW RED CARD

John Carew scored a brilliant late goal to earn Valencia a 1-1 draw at Athletic Bilbao last week and ensure his side will go into the New Year as Spanish first division leaders.

But the Norwegian's joy was short-lived as he received a second yellow card for an over-exuberant celebration and was sent off.

On a dramatic night of action going into the 18-day Christmas break in Spain, Valencia's draw proved enough to take them back above Real Madrid thanks to their superior goal difference.

Deportivo Coruna moved into third with a 3-0 win at home to Real Oviedo, while Barcelona stayed in touch with the leaders after a nerve-jangling 3-2 victory over Alaves at the Nou Camp.

Valencia lead on 32 points from 16 games, with Real Madrid second but with a game in hand following their impressive 3-1 triumph over Rayo Vallecano last week.

Reigning champions Deportivo have 31 points, with Barcelona fourth on 27.

Barcelona should have had their game against Alaves in the bag after an excellent display for the opening 70 minutes.

Marc Overmars set up Rivaldo for the opener after three minutes with the first of a series of incisive runs down the left.

The same combination provided the second shortly after the break as Magno attempted to clear an Overmars cross but only managed to send the ball cannoning in off Rivaldo's chest.

The Brazilian forward then set up Kluiviert on 69 minutes and Barca must have thought the game was won.

But Alaves pulled one back through a Javi Moreno penalty after Cosmin Contra was brought down by Jose Manuel Reina and two minutes later Magno took a Moreno pass to make it 2-3.

Magno then thought he had the equaliser with two minutes to go but his effort was ruled out for a marginal offside.

"You can't suffer so much when you're leading 3-0," said Barca coach Llorenc Serra Ferrer.

Real Madrid's Luis Figo get past a Rayo Vallecano defender during Real's 3-1 win.

Athletic Bilbao players celebrate their goal against Valencia. The match ended 1-1.

SPANISH PRIMERA LIGA

Athletic Bilbao 1 Valencia 1, Barcelona 3 Alaves 2, Deportivo Coruna 3 Real Oviedo 0, Las Palmas 3 Osasuna 2, Malaga 3 Real Sociedad 0, Numancia 4 Celta Vigo 2, Racing Santander 2 Valladolid 2, Real Mallorca 3 Espanyol 2, Villarreal 1 Real Zaragoza 1, Real Madrid 3 Rayo Vallecano 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Valencia	16	9	5	2	28	10	32
2. Real Madrid	15	10	2	3	34	18	32
3. Deportivo Coruna	16	9	4	3	28	14	31
4. Barcelona	16	8	3	5	32	24	27
5. Real Mallorca	16	7	5	4	21	19	26
6. Rayo Vallecano	16	6	6	4	33	25	24
7. Alaves	16	7	3	6	25	18	24
8. Real Oviedo	16	7	2	7	20	25	23
9. Villarreal	16	6	5	5	20	19	23
10. Malaga	16	6	3	7	26	25	21
11. Las Palmas	16	6	3	7	20	34	21
12. Athletic Bilbao	16	5	5	6	21	22	20
13. Real Zaragoza	15	4	7	4	18	16	19
14. Celta Vigo	16	5	4	7	21	26	19
15. Valladolid	16	3	9	4	16	19	18
16. Espanyol	16	5	3	8	17	21	18
17. Numancia	16	4	4	8	18	26	16
18. Racing Santander	16	3	5	8	19	28	14
19. Osasuna	16	2	7	7	16	24	13
20. Real Sociedad	16	3	3	10	15	35	12

QANTAS
THE SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIA

National Soccer League	TOTAL							HOME						AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A
SOUTH MELBOURNE	11	7	3	1	25	8	24	5	4	1	0	15	4	6	3	2	1	10	4
WOLLONGONG WOLVES	11	7	2	2	22	13	23	5	3	1	1	8	5	6	4	1	1	14	8
SYDNEY OLYMPIC	11	6	3	2	19	11	21	6	4	1	1	11	4	5	2	2	2	8	7
PERTH GLORY	11	5	2	3	21	10	20	6	4	1	1	13	3	5	2	1	2	8	7
NORTHERN SPIRIT	11	5	4	2	16	8	19	6	3	3	0	7	2	5	2	1	2	9	6
PARRAMATTA POWER	11	6	1	4	17	13	19	6	3	0	3	10	10	5	3	1	1	7	3
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE	11	6	1	4	18	18	19	6	3	1	2	15	13	4	2	0	2	3	5
MARCONI STALLIONS	11	4	4	3	12	10	16	5	2	1	2	7	7	6	2	3	1	5	3
SYDNEY UNITED	11	4	3	4	16	19	15	6	2	3	1	9	10	5	2	0	3	7	9
CANBERRA COSMOS	11	4	2	5	21	20	14	4	2	0	2	9	6	7	2	2	3	12	14
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS	11	4	2	5	17	19	14	5	3	1	1	10	5	6	1	1	4	7	13
FOOTBALL KINGZ	11	3	3	5	17	21	11	6	3	1	2	12	6	5	0	1	4	5	15
BRISBANE STRIKERS	11	2	4	5	13	18	10	4	1	2	1	6	6	7	1	2	4	7	12
NEWCASTLE UNITED	11	2	4	5	9	19	10	6	2	1	3	6	8	5	0	3	2	3	11
EASTERN PRIDE	11	2	3	6	16	19	9	6	1	3	2	8	9	5	1	0	4	8	10

Matches played against Carlton will result in all teams being awarded a 3-0 win and 3 competition points

NORTHERN SPIRIT 1
(Burgess 60)
BRISBANE STRIKERS 0

Venue: North Sydney Oval. **Crowd:** 3,758. **Referee:** B Hugo.
Cautions: Spencer (NS) 51, Langdon (NS) 80.
Teams: NORTHERN SPIRIT: Henderson, Cunico, Langdon, Bingley, Thomas, Burgess, Spencer (Enes 82), Bilokapic, Griffiths (Moreira 68), Foster, Arnold
BRISBANE STRIKERS: Duke, Stefanutto, Webber, Foster, Srhoj, Dwyer (Smeltz 84), McLaren, North (Hews 60), Davidson, Harris (Drake 75), Rech.

ADELAIDE CITY 3
(Vidmar 5, Tunbridge 17, Pantelis 84)
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 2
(Marth 44pen, Porter 75)

Venue: Hindmarsh Stadium. **Crowd:** 3,930. **Referee:** C Zetter.
Cautions: Vukadin (MK) 15, Cervinski (MK) 33, Rees (AC) 33, Veart (AC) 62, Pelosi (AC) 68, Kovacevic (AC) 80, Lapsansky (MK) 94.
Red Cards: Lagati (AC) 43, Vukadin (MK) 45.
Teams: ADELAIDE CITY: Cagel, Lagati, Kovacevic, Veart, Vidmar, Hassell, Tunbridge, Rees (Gaulding 66), Pantelis, Karlovic, Pelosi.
KNIGHTS: Aceski, R Vargas, Kiratzoglou, Vukadin, Horvat, Ognenovski, (Zolic 61, Basini 89), A Vargas, Marth, DaCosta, Porter, Cervinski (Lapsansky 46).

LEADING GOALSCORERS
After Round Eleven

BURGESS B	(Northern Spirit)	7
VLAHOS A	(Sth Melb)	7
MILLER J	(Parramatta)	6
THOMPSON A	(Carlton SC)	6

FOOTBALL KINGZ 0

PARRAMATTA POWER 1
(J Griffiths 19)

Venue: Ericsson Stadium. **Crowd:** 8,120. **Referee:** S Micallef.
Cautions: Brown (PP) 21.
Teams: AUCKLAND KINGZ: Marsh, Cartwright, Osman (Silva 73), Douglas (Davis 57), Perry (Van Steeden 85), Vicelich, Ngata, Bluhm, Lines, Burton, W. Ruter.
PARRAMATTA POWER: Crews, Elrich, Orlic, Tobin, Ardone, Griffiths (Barrett 84), Brown, Blagojevic, Vrkic, Bennett, Berry (Clarke 67).

PERTH GLORY 0
MARCONI STALLIONS 1
(Afkos 35)

Venue: Perth Oval. **Crowd:** 13,813. **Referee:** P Mur.
Cautions: Trajanovski (MS) 24, Junior (PG) 39, C.Gibson (MS) 40, Farah (MS) 41, Bell (MS) 47, Carbone (PG) 48.
Teams: PERTH GLORY: Petkovic, Trajkovski, Harnwell, Milicevic, Miller, Maloney (Roberts 59), Buljan (Edwards 59), Junior, Mori (Valle 92), Pryce, Carbone.
MARCONI STALLIONS: Aceski, Gibson, Costanzo, Longo, Keun Kim (Renaud 73), Afkos, McDonald, Care (Maisano 75), Farah, Bell, Trajanovski (Karl 78).

PLAYER OF THE WEEK

Marconi Stallions and former Perth Glory junior JAMIE AFKOS: Scored his first ever NSL goal in the 0-1 win at Perth Oval against the Glory last Saturday.

SYDNEY UNITED 0

SOUTH MELBOURNE 3
(Vlahos 27, Coveny 41, Susa 78)

Venue: Sydney United SC. **Crowd:** 2,230. **Referee:** M Shield.
Cautions: Plesa (SU) 25, Menapi (SU) 30, Panopoulos (SM) 44.
Teams: SYDNEY UNITED: Hughes, Kupresak (Maric 59), Plesa, Younis, Plesa, Younis, Arambasic, Deur (Awaritefe 77), Rastall, Genc, Menapi, Talevski, Palapanis (Pondeljak 46).
SOUTH MELBOURNE: Petkovic, De Amicis, Durakovic, Clarkson (Iosifidis 81), Panopoulos, Coveny (Kalogeracos 59), Trimboli (Anastasiadis 75), Boutsianis, Vlahos, Susa, Kisnorbo.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 2
(Baillie 62, Kohler 76)
WOLLONGONG WOLVES 2
(Young 21, Chipperfield 89)

Venue: Belmore SG. **Crowd:** 4,623. **Referee:** E. Lennie.
Cautions: Souris (WW) 4, Zorbas (SO) 43, Huxley (WW) 74.
Teams: SYDNEY OLYMPIC: Bolton, Baillie, Juric, Sinozic, Wilson, Zorbas, Owens, Kohler, Cardozo (Moore 80), Carle, Sarr (Parisi 70).
WOLLONGONG WOLVES: Barlow, Horsley, Souris, Blake, Mennillo, Reid, Ceccoli, Huxley, Chipperfield, Petrovski (Middelby 73), Young.

EASTERN PRIDE 3
(Roach 35 & 44, Griffiths 70)
CANBERRA COSMOS 1
(Castro 89)

Venue: Mobil Park. **Crowd:** 1,680. **Referee:** J Blaney.
Cautions: Arranz (CC) 34, Purdue (CC) 38, Fak (EP) 41, Roach (EP) 78, Stergiopoulos (EP) 48, Phillips (CC) 75, Castro (CC) 88.
Teams: EASTERN PRIDE: Jevdjevic, Fak, Goris, Stergiopoulos, Watkins (Buhagiar 88), Bell, Roach, Hutchinson, Wearne, Katz, Puca (Griffiths 59, Deak 86).
CANBERRA COSMOS: Konstantinou, Popovich, Ravenello, Purdue, Imaya, Castro, Arranz, Cortes (Phillips 45), Lyons (Hagger 76), Hooker (Scott 54), Miyazama.

MARCONI STALLIONS
BYE

ROUND 12

FRIDAY DECEMBER 29

Parramatta Power	vs	Northern Spirit
Newcastle Breakers	vs	Sydney United
Wollongong Wolves	vs	Eastern Pride

SATURDAY DECEMBER 30

Brisbane Strikers	vs	Adelaide City Force
Canberra Cosmos	vs	Football Kingz
Melbourne Knights	vs	Perth Glory
South Melbourne	vs	Sydney Olympic

Marconi Stallions bye